

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, PC, MP
Minister of Health of Canada
70 Colombine Driveway
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9
hcmminister.ministresc@canada.ca

5 – 1100 Tulip Avenue
Victoria, BC
V8Z 0A2

December 8, 2018

Re: Change in current blood deferral policy for men who have had sex with men

Dear Minister,

I am writing as a patient who has, in the past, received transfusions of packed red blood cells. As a recipient, I understand the need for confidence in the blood supply and the anxiety being unsure of its safety can cause, in particular, for those whose very survival is dependent on regular transfusions.

I feel that the science is now available to make a change in this policy timely and a positive step. I support a change to a 3-month time-based deferral.

I have followed the changes over the past years closely, first as a member of the Canadian Blood Services (CBS) National Liaison Committee and, more recently, as a member of the BC & Yukon CBS Regional Liaison Committee. I have also attended meetings and Webinars on the subject and am confident the change can be made with no reduction in the safety of the blood.

Blood safety also includes an adequate supply and this move will help to ensure this.

Once implemented, I expect continued monitoring of blood safety. I would also like to see a move to a system which would allow men who have sex with men and who are in stable, long-term relationships be allowed to donate.

I believe that this proposed policy change is also aligned with the government's evidence-based approach and its prioritization of research and science

Yours sincerely,
Pamela Wishart

cc. **Simon Kennedy**, Deputy Minister, Health Canada: Simon.kennedy@canada.ca
Pierre Sabourin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Products and Food Branch (HPFB) Health Canada: Pierre.sabourin@canada.ca
Cathy Parker, Acting Director General, Biologics & Genetic Therapies Directorate, (HPFB) Health Canada: Cathy.parker@canada.ca
Dr. Graham Sher, CEO, Canadian Blood Services (graham.sher@blood.ca)
Don Lapierre (don.lapierre@blood.ca) at Canadian Blood Services.