

December 11th, 2018

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, PC, MP

Minister of Health of Canada

70 Colombine Driveway

Tunney's Pasture

Ottawa, Ontario

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Dear Minister Ginette Pititpas-Taylor,

I am writing to you as a member of the Canadian Blood Services British Columbia & Yukon Regional Liaison Committee representing young Canadians to implore you to change the policy deferring men who have had sexual contact with other men (MSM) in the last year from donating blood products. Though this policy may have held merit with regard to the protection of the blood supply in the past, it is now no longer the case in light of an evolution of scientific knowledge and understanding.

This policy recommendation is the result of an extensive consultation process over the last two years since the last policy change from five years to one year in 2016, of which I have participated extensively. Through dialogue with the scientific and MSM communities as well as patient groups, I have come to understand that this change is necessary and long overdue. Not only is this policy change timely and in concordance with the current scientific understanding, but it may also help to signal yet another positive step in bringing about a donor policy which does not discriminate against individuals or a particular sexual orientation. This is of paramount importance as the tenor of my generation has been that of standing up for social values of inclusivity and justice and equality for all. By moving towards the MSM community the ability to make this choice, a donation to the Canadian blood supply becomes a more inclusive and altruistic act.

Once the policy change from one year to three is implemented, it should be clear that any additional changes in policy that follow should be grounded soundly in our scientific understanding of the matter and that, with this as our foundation, no undue risk is being passed onto the recipient of our products. As always, surveillance of our blood supply should be ongoing and assessed for risk at every step of the process, with the ultimate goal of creating a policy which best reflects an accurate understanding of the science involved. With this, I believe we will one day be able to achieve equality in the blood system to which we all aspire.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Kevin Adam BHSc

CC:

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