



The Honourable Ginette Petitpas-Taylor
Minister of Health
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Honourable Minister of Health,

The Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada/Association d'Anémie Falciforme du Canada (SCDAC/AAFC) is a charitable organization representing a patient community that relies on the donation of whole blood for our very survival. We are writing regarding the proposal by Canadian Blood Services (CBS) and Héma Québec (H-Q) to reduce the blood donation deferral for men who have had sex with men (MSM) from 12 to 3 months. SCDAC/AAFC has previously supported reductions in the time-based deferral from five years to one year. As such we are in support of a change to a 3-month time-based deferral to the MSM policy.

We believe that this policy is timely and would be considered a positive step that will have a positive impact on younger generation's reaction to issues of social justice therefore potentially increasing blood supply from that cohort. The proposed policy change is also aligned with the government's evidence-based approach and its prioritization of research and science.

SCDAC/AAFC still wants an evidence-based time-based deferral to be maintained for the safety of fresh blood components. The consultation approach by the Canadian Blood Services has increased our comfort level and allowed us to confirm that the safety of the blood supply will be maintained and well monitored.

Sincerely,

Biba Tinga
President/Executive Director
Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada/ Association d'Anémie Falciforme du Canada