Media Advisory

Press Release

June 9, 2010

Joint Letter
Gay Rights Organizations
Community Based Hemophilia Organizations

Regarding the MSM Blood Donor Deferral Policy
Before The
Advisory Committee on Blood Safety and Availability
Department of Health and Human Services
June 10-11, 2010
The Universities at Shady Grove, Rockville, MD

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Joint Statement on Addressing the MSM Blood Ban by Groups Representing People Living with Hemophilia, Gay Men and People Living with HIV/AIDS

The Department of Health & Human Services, Advisory Committee on Blood Safety and Availability will be reviewing the current Food and Drug Administration (FDA) policy recommending that men who have sex with another man (MSM) even one time since 1977 should be deferred indefinitely from donating blood.
In the following joint letter advocacy organizations representing both the Gay & Lesbian Communities and the Plasma User Communities have signed on to demonstrate their past and ongoing ability to work together on issues surrounding the safety of our nation’s blood and our public health.

“As the Department of Health and Human Services' Advisory Committee on Blood Safety and Availability (ACBSA) prepares to evaluate the longstanding deferral of all men who have had sex with men (MSM) from donating blood, the organizations listed below wish to clarify a recently encountered misperception. Advocates invested in any change of such a policy report a perceived disconnect between the positions of leading gay rights and hemophilia representatives. We reject this notion.

The communities have more in common than current discourse reflects. Both gay men and people with hemophilia have been disproportionately impacted by the HIV epidemic. Critical advancements in HIV prevention, treatment, and research can be linked directly to the years of successful advocacy by both communities. For most of the past quarter century, these two communities have worked toward shared goals, including caring for people living with HIV and preventing the virus’s spread.

The organizations listed below continue to share a strong commitment to the safety of our nation's blood supply and it is with this in mind that we urge the ACBSA to recommend any scientific research that is necessary to allow for the thoughtful consideration of alternative policies regarding donor deferral. We look forward to working with the Advisory Committee, and the broader federal government, to critically examine and evaluate alternative polices for MSM blood donors that maintain or enhance the safety of blood and blood products.”

AIDS Action Council
AmFAR
Committee of Ten Thousand
Gay Men’s Health Crisis
Hemophilia Federation of America
Human Rights Campaign
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National Hemophilia Foundation
World Federation of Hemophilia