



December 21, 2015

AABB, America's Blood Centers and the American Red Cross issued the following joint statement regarding the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) final guidance for deferral criteria for men who have had sex with men (MSM):

"AABB, America's Blood Centers and the American Red Cross are pleased that the FDA has released its final guidance regarding deferral criteria for men who have had sex with men (MSM).

The top priority of the blood banking community is the safety of our volunteer blood donors and the recipients of blood. AABB, America's Blood Centers and the Red Cross support the FDA's decision to change the MSM blood donation policy from a lifetime deferral to a one-year deferral. This policy change aligns the MSM donor deferral period with those for other activities that may pose a similar risk of transfusion-transmissible infections.

While the final FDA guidance describes a pathway for previously deferred donors to give blood, it will take several months for blood centers to update their computer systems, modify processes and procedures, train staff and implement these extensive changes.

Our blood banks will work diligently to determine a process for the reinstatement of eligible donors who were deferred under the previous MSM policy; however, it is important to understand that this process will take time."

###