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America's Blood Centers Supports Updated FDA Guidance on vCJD

Upholds the safety of our nation's blood supply while allowing more people to donate at a critical time

Washington, DC – America's Blood Centers, (ABC) the national organization of community-based, independent blood centers that supply 60 percent of the nation's blood supply, today applauded the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) [updated guidance on Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease \(vCJD\)](#). Commonly referred to as Mad Cow Disease, vCJD is a rare disease of the central nervous system. Despite initial concerns of potential transmission, science continues to show that the transmission risk of vCJD by blood components remains only theoretical.

“The FDA's updated guidance is good news for our nation's blood supply at a critical time. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to place pressure on the nation's blood supply and restrict many traditional blood drives. These changes follow the science while allowing more people to safely donate. While these changes can't be implemented overnight, blood collection establishments will move to update computer systems and donor history questionnaires as quickly as possible so we can welcome back these deferred donors without delay,” said Kate Fry, Chief Executive Officer at America's Blood Centers.

This updated guidance removes the deferral recommendations associated with geographic risk of vCJD for time spent in the United Kingdom (U.K.) from 1980-1996; time spent in France and Ireland from 1980-2001; and receipt of a blood transfusion in the U.K., France, or Ireland from 1980-present.

Permanent deferrals remain in place for donors with a history of receiving a human cadaveric (allogeneic) dura mater transplant and for donors who volunteer that they suspect having vCJD, CJD or another similar disease; have a blood relative diagnosed with a similar disease; or who received cadaveric pituitary human growth hormone.

Founded in 1962, America's Blood Centers is the national organization bringing together community-based, independent blood centers. Its member organizations operate more than 600 blood collection sites providing close to 60 percent of the U.S., and a quarter of the Canadian, blood supply. These blood centers serve more than 150 million people and provide blood products and services to more than 3,500 hospitals and healthcare facilities across North America. All ABC U.S. members are licensed and regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. For more information, visit www.AmericasBlood.org.

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