

**Deferral Policy Regarding Males Who  
Have Had Sex With Other Males**



- The American Red Cross supports the AABB position that the current lifetime deferral for men who have had sex with other men is unwarranted and recommends that deferral criteria be modified and made comparable with criteria for other groups at increased risk for sexual transmission of transfusion-transmitted infections.
- Patient safety and the integrity of the blood supply is the top priority of the American Red Cross.
- The Red Cross is obligated to follow all Food and Drug Administration guidelines to the blood industry regarding donor eligibility.
- The ARC strongly supports the use of rational, scientifically-based deferral periods that are applied fairly and consistently among donors who engage in similar risk activities.
- The Red Cross commends the willingness of the FDA to review the MSM deferral as part of its review of current behavioral risk deferral policies.
- The Red Cross has worked with the AABB and others in the blood industry to develop an overall data-based industry position on the MSM deferral.
- Subsequent to the last public FDA review of the deferral policy for donors reporting MSM behavior (Sept. 2000), additional information has accumulated regarding the safety of blood transfusion. In particular, considerable experience with the efficacy of nucleic acid testing (NAT) has been gained.
- The safety of the donor and the ultimate recipient of the blood is our paramount concern. We believe that accurate donor histories and medically supportable donor deferral criteria are critical to the continued safety of blood transfusion.

**American Red Cross Blood Services  
New England Region**