

HIV+HEP
POLICY INSTITUTE
PRESS STATEMENT

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FDA Proposes to Lift Discriminatory Blood Donation Ban for Gay Men

Washington DC... In response to draft [guidance](#) issued today by the FDA that removes the issue of sexual orientation when determining who can donate blood, **Carl Schmid, executive director of the HIV+ Hepatitis Policy Institute**, issued the following statement:

“This marks a monumental shift and ends a long and painful era of blanket discrimination against gay men. No longer will eligibility to donate blood be based on sexual orientation. Instead, every person, no matter their sexuality, will be reviewed individually in order to determine their eligibility to donate. While this long-overdue change is being made based on the science and the facts, which have been clear for years, it is the result of the leadership of the Biden administration that continues to tear down discriminatory government policies.”

At the advent of the AIDS crisis in the early 1980s, men who have sex with men, along with others, faced a lifetime ban on blood donation. Beginning in 2015, the Obama administration updated the policy to allow gay men who had not had sex with another man for the past twelve months to donate blood. In 2020, the Trump administration reduced the ban to three months, but still applied it to all gay men. Today’s draft guidance removes the restrictions based on sexual orientation and moves it to sexual activity. Under the proposal, all blood donors will be screened for HIV risk in the same way, with restrictions on donation based on sexual and other practices over the three months prior to the donation. This should enlarge the pool of blood donors at a time of historic shortages in the nation’s blood supply while continuing to ensure its safety.

People living with HIV would still be banned from donating blood, along with people on PrEP, which are drugs that prevent HIV.

The draft guidelines are open for public comment for 60 days.

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The **HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute** is a national, non-profit organization whose mission is to promote quality and affordable healthcare for people living with or at risk of HIV, hepatitis, and other serious and chronic health conditions.

HIV + HEPATITIS POLICY INSTITUTE

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