

## Holmberg, Jerry A (HHS/OPHS)

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**From:** Elana Stone [EStone@APLA.ORG]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 07, 2010 1:18 PM  
**To:** ACBSA  
**Subject:** Please End Decade Long Ban on MSM Blood Donation

To Mr Jerry Holmberg,

I am pleased to learn that the Advisory Committee on Blood Safety and Availability is planning to review the FDA regulation which bans any man who has ever had sex with another man since 1977 from donating blood.

It is my hope that you will hear from a number of individuals and organizations, and political leaders leading up to your meeting later this week giving you sound scientific evidence for why this ban is absolutely no longer necessary. You should be hearing all about the advent of new HIV testing technologies that make detection of HIV in any donated blood so accurate that this ban is not needed as a broad safety net guarantee.

What I hope to impress upon you is the importance of lifting this ban also for the message it sends to the entire world about our treatment of gay and bisexual men, as well as our fear of HIV. It is true that men who have sex with men (MSM) are more highly impacted by HIV. That does not make it ok to discriminate against ALL MSM out of fear of HIV contamination in donated blood. Our nation's blood supply is so much more important than our outdated, unfounded fear of HIV, and makes it that much more hurtful if we continue to discriminate against the gay community. Since we have the science to support us, let us take advantage of it.

I write to you as a young person who has never lived in the US at a time when HIV has not been around. Homophobia and stigma have also been pervasive elements of my years. Discriminating against MSM sends such a powerful message that gay men are not to be trusted, are less valued, and should be feared. I urge you to please do what you can to undo these nasty ripple effects of the ban on gay blood donation. Use the power of science and overwhelming community support to tackle this stanchion of unnecessary discrimination. Your work toward ending this ban will not only help reverse decades of discrimination, but will allow our blood banks to expand their donor pools in safe and healthy ways.

Please help lift the ban on gay blood donation.

Most sincerely,

Elana Stone

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