



**America's Blood
Centers**

Statement

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STATEMENT TO THE TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY COMMITTEE

America's Blood Centers (ABC) represents 75 non-profit, community independent blood programs that together account for about half of the nation's volunteer donor blood supply.

ABC appreciates the fact that the FDA has, as a result of regular meetings of this committee, encouraged frequent review of the emerging information about the spongiform encephalopathies.

Against the background that there is still no evidence to demonstrate that new variant CJD is more than a theoretical risk for human blood transfusion recipients, ABC also appreciates FDA's commitment to requesting review of previous restrictions on donors for their continuing appropriateness.

At the same time, ABC recognizes that the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy to other European countries must prompt debate about possible modification of recent deferral criteria, which currently applies to donors previously visiting the United Kingdom.

In considering any need for additional precautionary measures, ABC asks the committee to balance new restrictions on donation against continuing deferral of donors. ABC recognizes that transfusion safety, which is of paramount importance, is a goal that must be linked to blood availability at a time when blood shortages are nearly chronic in nature and increasingly result in the cancellation of non-urgent surgeries.

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