



Blood Bank of Hawaii

Give Blood. It's Safe. It's Simple. It Saves Lives.

For Immediate Release

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NEW BLOOD DONOR ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

HONOLULU, March 26, 2014 – Effective April 1, 2014, Blood Bank of Hawaii (BBH) will be opening the doors for more donors due to new eligibility criteria. With advancements in medical research and technology, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) determined these new requirements to be safe for both donors and patients. These changes will help expand the population's donor pool and better meet the hospitals' needs.

The implementation of these new criteria will expand the blood donor community by changing eligibility for the portion of Hawaii's population that was once either unable to, or categorized as a deferral. With this new evolution in blood donor suitability, blood banks across the nation are redefining the answer to, "Who Can Donate?"

"A change of this scale has not happened in Hawaii for decades," said Kim-Anh Nguyen, president and CEO of Blood Bank of Hawaii. "Medical research has opened up doors for donors without compromising the safety of the donors and patients. With our new donor history questionnaire and new eligibility criteria we are now in line with national standards of practice."

One of the biggest changes in donor eligibility is for those with previous health issues. New medical research has shown that cancer is not spread through blood transfusion. This means that cancer survivors, other than blood or bone marrow types (leukemia and lymphoma), who have completed treatment, and have been cancer-free for one year or more, are now eligible to donate blood. In addition, those with autoimmune disorders, who have had a stroke, or have lung and heart conditions, once considered permanent deferrals are also eligible as long as no symptoms are present at the time of donation.

Another highlight of the new eligibility changes is the elimination of temporary deferrals such as a waiting period for tattoos and piercings. The recently tattooed can now donate as long as the process was performed at a state regulated tattoo shop; piercings need to have been performed using a sterile procedure or gun method with new jewelry.

BBH is committed to regulatory excellence complying with FDA guidelines and AABB (formerly American Association of Blood Banks) standards of practice.

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For eligibility information and changes please visit BBH.org. Persons currently deferred who think they may be eligible under the new criteria may call 848-4745 for more information regarding an eligibility review.

About Blood Bank of Hawaii

Founded in 1941, Blood Bank of Hawaii (BBH) is a non-profit organization committed to providing a safe and adequate supply of blood, blood products and related transfusion services to Hawaii's patients. BBH is licensed and regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, accredited by AABB, and a founding member of America's Blood Centers, the nation's largest network of community-based blood programs. For more information, visit www.BBH.org.

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