



## **Joint Statement Regarding Ebola and the Safety of the Blood Supply**

**AABB, America's Blood Centers and the American Red Cross issued the following statement regarding the blood community's response to Ebola on October 15, 2014:**

The top priority of the blood banking community is the safety of blood recipients, donors and staff. Individuals who have traveled to countries where Ebola is prevalent are currently deferred from blood donation because these areas are also considered at risk for malaria.

Ebola virus has never been transmitted by blood transfusion, but we are being very cautious while the epidemic unfolds in Africa. With the current health history screening process, the risk of transfusion-transmission is incredibly low. Anyone with a temperature of higher than 99.5 is automatically deferred from giving blood.

In addition, we are asking individuals who have been told by public health authorities that they may have been exposed to a patient with Ebola virus not to donate blood for 28 days following their last contact with the infected person. This request for donors to self-defer from giving blood comes as a recommendation from AABB (formerly known as the American Association of Blood Banks).

Ebola testing is only performed by highly specialized labs such as those operated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There is currently no test available to screen routine blood donations in the United States.

While there is no proven treatment available for Ebola, blood collected from patients who have recovered from the disease may provide effective treatment. The blood plasma in former Ebola patients contains antibodies that may be successful in fighting off the disease.

Donating blood is a safe process, and people should not hesitate to give or receive blood. Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood, and that need can only be met through the generosity of volunteer donors.

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