



BLOOD CENTERS OF CALIFORNIA

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

“Blood Centers of California Supports FDA ADVANCE Study Regarding Donation Eligibility Criteria for Gay and Bisexual Men (ADVANCE: “Assessing Donor Variability and New Concepts in Eligibility”)

The FDA is re-thinking blood donation eligibility criteria for gay and bisexual men (Men who have Sex with Men, MSM). To initiate this process, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is funding a pilot study titled “Assessing Donor Variability and New Concepts in Eligibility (ADVANCE)” to collect data from participating gay and bisexual men that will inform next steps in a data-driven approach to modifying MSM eligibility criteria. The national study goal is enrollment by a total of 2000 gay and bisexual men in eight US cities by March 31, 2022; approximately 800 people have enrolled so far.

Vitalant in San Francisco and the American Red Cross in Los Angeles are participating sites with a combined goal of 500-550 enrollments by March 31, 2022.

Blood Centers of California supports ADVANCE because it is a data-focused approach to re-evaluating blood donation criteria for gay and bisexual men. These individuals are currently deferred from donating blood if they have had sex with another man within the previous 3 months. This type of deferral, based on the time interval since the occurrence of a risk factor, is referred to as a “time-based deferral” and is not based on individual risk. ADVANCE data and subsequent FDA-sponsored research will help determine whether blood donation eligibility for gay and bisexual men can be based on individual risk, that is, “individual risk-based deferrals,” which is a more individual-specific approach.

Additional information about ADVANCE is available at ADVANCEstudy.org.