

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Statement on FDA announcing updated blood donation policy

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – In the midst of a nationwide shortage of donated blood spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today announced an updated blood donation deferral policy to allow more healthy gay and bisexual men to donate blood. The new policy lowers the 12-month deferral to a three-month deferral for men who have sex with men (MSM), and includes a commitment to gather further evidence on pursuing blood donation policies based on individual risk factors, rather than a blanket deferral.

**U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin released the following statement on the FDA's announcement regarding changes to their blood donation deferral policy:** *"I have long fought to end discriminatory blood donation policies and ensure that all healthy individuals are able to donate. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a nationwide blood shortage, and now more than ever, we must work to increase our nation's supply based on science and facts. The FDA's announcement today is another important step to helping solve this dire blood supply shortage, but there's still more work to be done. The administration needs to change their blood donation policies to be based on individual risk so that all healthy gay and bisexual men are able to donate. This is more important than ever as we continue working to address the COVID-19 pandemic and help save lives."*

While government health officials encourage every healthy individual to consider donating blood, the FDA continues to enforce a discriminatory donor deferral policy that effectively prohibits many healthy gay and bisexual men from doing so. [Last week](#), Senator Baldwin and her colleagues wrote to FDA raising concerns with their discriminatory blood donation deferral policy for MSM.

Senator Baldwin has been a leader on this issue for years. In 2016, Senator Baldwin [led a bipartisan group of Senators](#) in calling on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to swiftly move to end the discriminatory blood donation deferral policy for men who have sex with men (MSM). In December 2014, she led [over 75 members of Congress calling on HHS](#) to end the outdated and discriminatory ban, and replace it by instituting a risk-based policy.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).