



**American  
Red Cross**

Connecticut Blood Services Region

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**Testimony of Dr. Patricia Pisciotto 02-09-2011**

Senator Stillman, Representative Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee, my name is

Dr. Patricia Pisciotto and I have served as Chief Medical Officer for the American Red Cross Blood Services, Northeast Division since 2007 and have been involved in blood banking as an MD for over 30 years. I am board certified in the specialties of pediatric hematology/oncology and blood banking/transfusion medicine. In my role at the Red Cross, I am committed to donor and patient safety.

The health and safety of every blood donor who volunteers to roll up their sleeve and every patient who receives blood is the core of our mission. We train every member of our collections staff in a twelve week program to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements of the FDA, professional standards set by AABB, as well as our own high standards of performance. Each Red Cross Blood Region has dedicated physicians who are available 24-hours a day to consult about any medical concerns relating to blood drives.

The valuable clinical skills that nurses possess in the care of sick patients are not required at every blood drive to ensure donor safety and therefore, I do not support state legislation mandating a nurse be present at every blood drive in the state of Connecticut.

The importance we place on the safety of our donors and the care which we use in the screening process is reflected in the fact that almost all of our donors have a good donation experience and feel good about their altruistic act. The people who come to our blood drives are healthy

volunteer donors who are thoroughly screened by a health history and a mini physical provided by trained Red Cross staff before they are allowed to donate. To that end, we do defer approximately 12% of donors who do not meet eligibility for either their safety, the safety of the patient or both. We are also prepared, through the regulated training we provide to our staff, to provide care to those donors who experience a reaction, which for the most part are minor in nature. Significant donor reactions are rare events and when they do occur we have procedures in place to care for our donors on an immediate basis and also to follow-up on their care. In 2010, the CT collection staff reported major reactions occurring at blood drives in .03% or well less than one in 1,000 donations.

We recognize the important contribution that our nurses make, as well as our technicians, supervisors, technologists, quality assurance staff, physicians and all who play a vital role in serving both blood donors and patients

There are no federal regulations or professional standards that require a nurse be present at a blood drive, and such a requirement has not been standard for blood collection sites across the United States. As a seasoned physician, with many years of hospital and blood center experience, I do not fundamentally believe that this requirement is needed.

I urge that you continue to support the American Red Cross and our lifesaving mission by not supporting the requirement in Bill #6277 that a nurse must be on site at all times during a blood drive.

Thank you.