



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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BLOOD DONATIONS BY MINORS IN RHODE ISLAND

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You asked a series of questions about the Rhode Island law that allows 16-year-olds to donate blood. Specifically, you want to know (1) if there are regulations governing 16-year-old donors, (2) who may draw the blood, (3) whether certain medical professionals must be on site, (4) if parental consent is required, and (5) if these children must be accompanied by a parent or another adult when donating.

In 2009, Rhode Island passed a [law](#) allowing 16-year-olds to donate blood starting on February 1, 2010. Previously, only people age 17 and older could donate.

Although Rhode Island has not adopted regulations governing who may draw blood, regardless of the donor's age, federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [regulations](#) address blood collection. These regulations require that blood be drawn by a qualified physician or under his or her supervision by assistants trained in the procedure. The regulations also require a physician to be present on the premises where blood is collected unless the donation site (1) maintains on the premises and files with the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research a manual of standard procedures and methods, approved by the center's director, that must be followed by the employees who collect the blood and (2) maintains records indicating the name of the person in charge of these employees.

Rhode Island's Blood Center has created a consent form (attached) that must be completed and presented on the day of the blood donation. It created a separate form that provides general information for these children and their parents. This includes the center's determination of the blood's suitability (based on answers to interview questions), the possibility of adverse reactions, and the testing of donated blood for viral agents. This information is provided to older donors as well.

Sixteen-year-olds may donate only if they (1) get permission from their parent or guardian and (2) weigh at least 130 pounds. (Older donors can weigh as little as 110 pounds and do not need parental consent.) Typically, these children donate at school blood drives but they may donate at other community blood drives as well. They do not have to be accompanied by a parent or another adult when donating.

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