



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

Dr. Arthur Caplan, Chairman  
Advisory Committee on Blood Safety and Availability  
Center for Bioethics  
University of Pennsylvania  
3401 Market Street, Suite 320  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3308

Dear Dr. Caplan:

Thank you for your thoughtful recommendations for persons inadvertently exposed to hepatitis C through blood transfusion. Your recommendations have greatly assisted the Department's extensive review of this matter.

I support your recommendation for the use of direct notification efforts to reach those individuals who received a transfusion from a donor who later tested positive for hepatitis C by a confirmed second generation screening test. I also support your recommendation for a public and provider education effort directed at those who received blood before this second generation screening test was available. This education effort will also benefit others at risk for hepatitis C, regardless of the source of their risk.

In addition, I intend to go beyond your recommendations. I consider these steps to be only the first phase of a comprehensive plan to address this significant public health problem. It is my intention to reach effectively as many people at risk as we can. Today's decision will allow us to move immediately to address concerns among transfusion recipients at greatest risk. At the same time, we will educate the public at large, evaluate our efforts, and take even more steps to address unmet needs as we identify them.

I am directing the Public Health Service Blood Safety Committee, chaired by the Blood Safety Director, to meet regularly to review progress in these efforts and make appropriate recommendations for further action. We will keep you informed of our progress.

Sincerely,



Donna E. Shalala