



CAPE COD HEALTHCARE

For Immediate Release

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PSA: New Blood Donation Guidelines Reinstate Eligibility for Potential Donors

(Hyannis, MA – May 8, 2023) – Following recently updated guidelines by the Food and Drug Administration, Cape Cod Healthcare will reinstate eligibility for donors who were previously deferred from blood donation because of travel or residence in the United Kingdom, France or Ireland.

The deferral was connected to a risk of transmitting the variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD, also known as mad cow disease) to blood transfusion recipients. The FDA has concluded this is no longer a geographic risk to donors who have lived in the UK and other European countries.

Previous FDA guidance recommended indefinite deferral for people who spent time in the UK from 1980 to 1996 or France and Ireland from 1980 to 2001, or people who received a blood transfusion in the UK, France or Ireland from 1980 to the present.

In light of the new guidance change, Jonathan Decoste, Senior Blood Recruiter at Cape Cod Healthcare, encourages those who are newly eligible to give blood donation a try.

“We encourage anyone who may have been previously deferred from donating having lived, worked, studied or stationed in the military during this time frame to try again,” says Decoste.

Donors will still see questions on the health questionnaire regarding travel overseas, but this will no longer result in a deferral related to vCJD.

Individuals with questions about their donation eligibility may contact the Nicholas G. Xiarhos Blood Donor Center at 508-862-5663. The Nicholas G. Xiarhos Blood Donor Center inside Cape Cod Hospital is open by appointment from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. To make an appointment at an upcoming blood drive, please visit the Blood Donor Portal - <https://srt.capecodhealth.org/donorportal>

About Cape Cod Healthcare

Cape Cod Healthcare is the leading provider of healthcare services for residents and visitors of

Cape Cod. With more than 550 physicians, nearly 5,000 employees and 500 volunteers, Cape Cod Healthcare is comprised of two acute care hospitals, the Cape's leading provider of homecare and hospice services (VNA), six urgent care centers, a primary and specialty care network, a skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility, an assisted living facility, and numerous health services and programs. For more information, visit the Cape Cod Healthcare website at www.capecodhealth.org. For the latest in relevant and credible healthcare news, visit www.capecodhealthnews.com.