

Gay men protest blood bank policies

by UPI

SEATTLE -- The gay community has accused Seattle blood banks of discriminating against the majority of gay and bi-sexual men who wish to donate blood. Last week's announcement by the Puget Sound Blood Center that blood stock levels were dangerously low was met with frustration from those who claim the center's rigid constraints reject approximately 6 percent of its attempted donors, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported Wednesday. "They won't take our blood. They think we're disease carriers," a man said. Men who claim to have had any sexual contact with a member of their sex since 1977 are automatically put on a deferral list and banned from donating blood. The Food and Drug Administration said the procedure is designed to shield the U.S. blood reserve from HIV. Opponents to the strict donor requirements reportedly claim a more careful selection of those rejected could avoid such broad disqualifications.

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