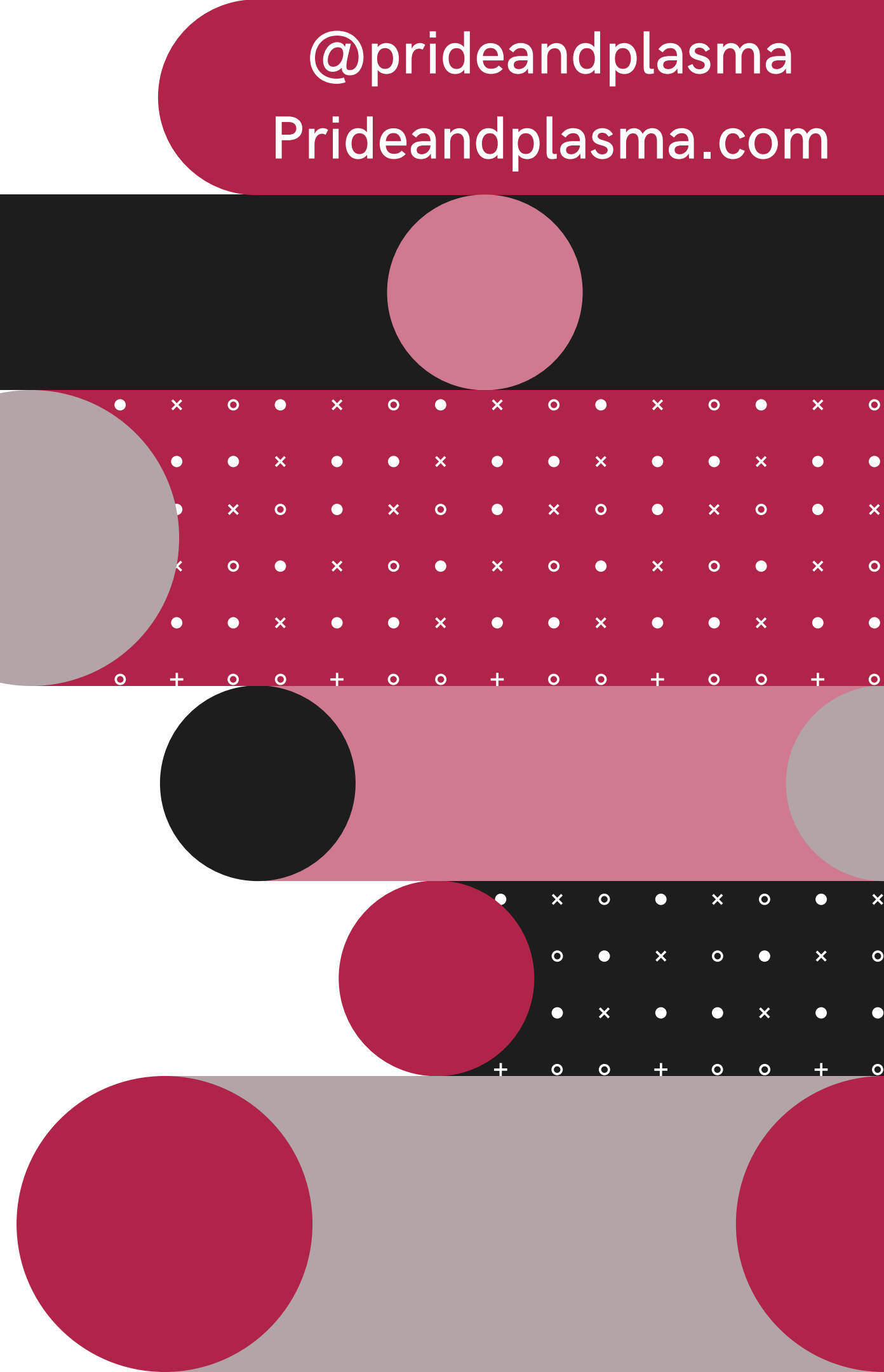


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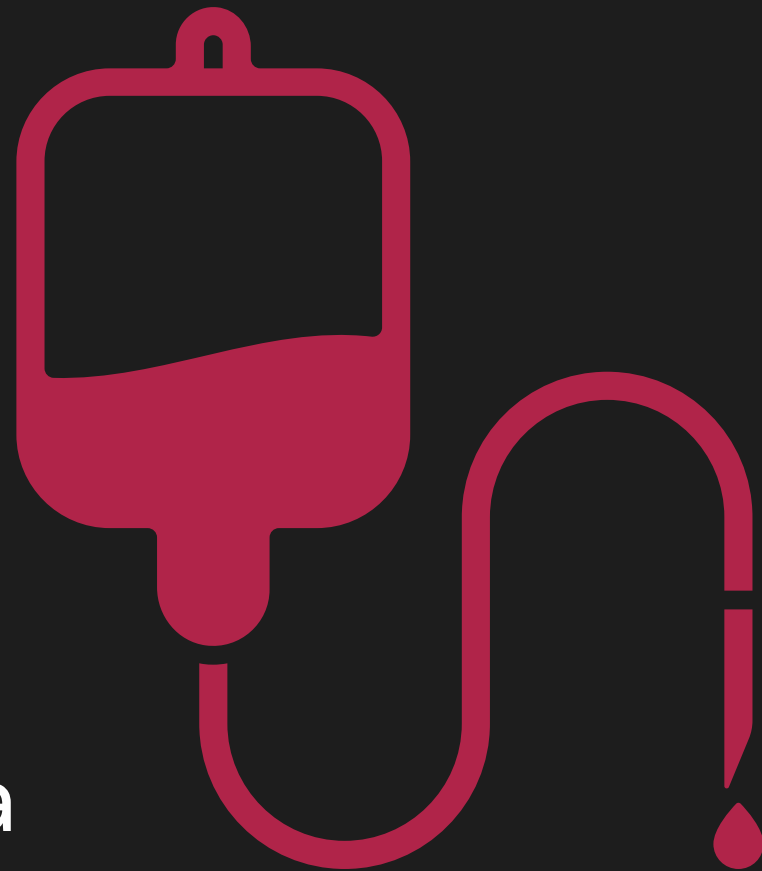


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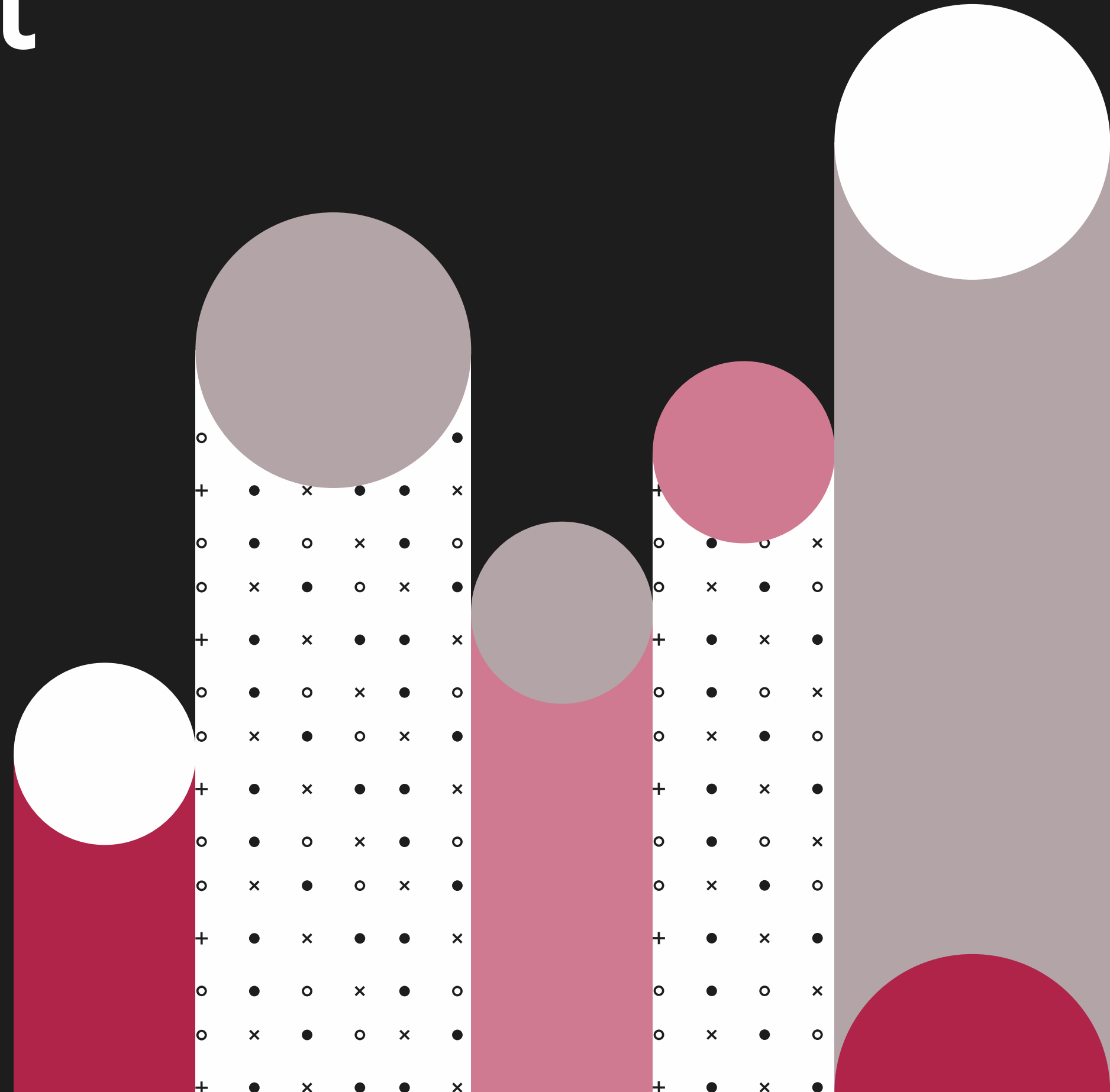
Fighting the FDA's ban on
blood donations from
queer men



When was the last time you donated blood?



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What is the FDA's Deferment Policy?

Individuals who have participated in the following are unable to donate

Lifetime Deferral

- Hemophilia or other clotting disorder
- Positive HIV test result

3 Month Deferral

- Treatment for Gonorrhea/ Syphilis
- Contact with blood products of another individual
- New tattoo or piercing
- Injection of non-prescription drugs
- Exchange of monetary funds for sexual acts
- Recipient of blood product transfusion
- Male sexual activity with other men
- Female sexual activity with MSM
- Sexual activity with anyone who has participated in any previous deferral categories

How has the policy affected queer men?

The History

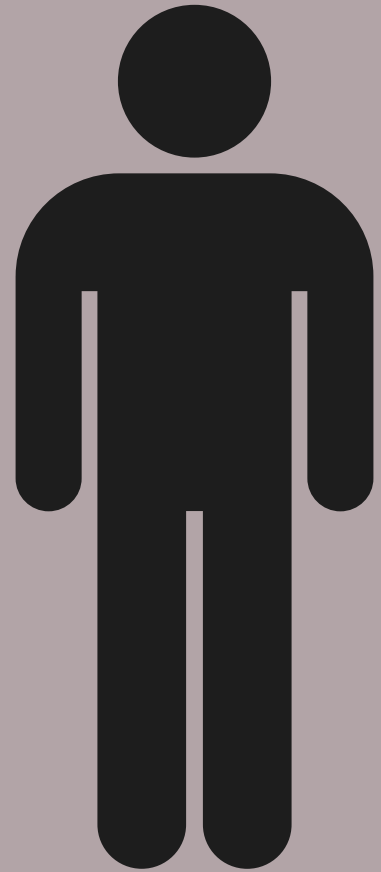
- 1985: the FDA enacted a lifetime ban for blood donations from any male donor who has had sex with another man since 1977.
- 2015: Thanks to the efforts of the National Gay Blood Drive, the FDA revises the lifetime ban in favor of a required 12 month period of celibacy
- 2020: With a blood shortage from the Covid-19 pandemic, the FDA shortens the 12 month period to 3 months of abstinence

The Specifics

The deferment policy makes no exceptions for type of sex, as well as no exceptions for safe sex, monogamy, or getting tested. It is a blanket deferment that ignores science

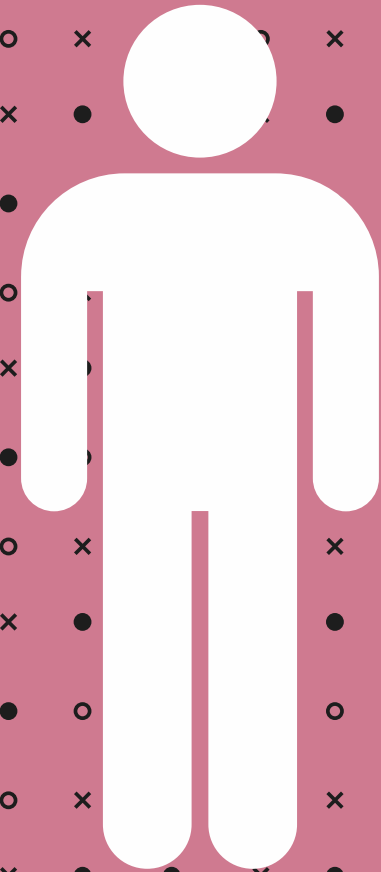
Tale of Two Donors

John



- Has never been tested for STDs
- Has unprotected sex
- Has had 25 partners within the past 3 months

Mark



- Is tested every month for STDs
- Only has safe sex
- Is on Truvada for PreExposure Prophylaxis
- Is in a monogamous relationship with his boyfriend

***Which of these two donors has a higher risk of HIV?
Which of them can donate blood?***

How safe is blood donation?

- 1 Blood banks use Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) which can detect HIV's presence in the blood within 10-33 days. The risk of contracting HIV from a transfusion is 1 in 1.5 million.
- 2 NAT testing began to be implemented in 1999. The FDA's MSM deferment policy was implemented 14 years prior- when HIV was poorly understood and means for testing were not widely available

Why is the policy discriminatory?

1

The policy does not apply the same restrictions given to queer men to heterosexual individuals.

The FDA should be focused on turning away donors based on risk, not sexuality.

2

The deferment policy is longer than necessary for HIV to incubate within a donor- which takes only 10-33 days, not 3 months

3

There aren't exemptions for those taking PrEP, using safe sex methods, in monogamous relationships, or getting tested. Those lowering their risks are still affected by the ban.

What is the FDA's role in blood donation?

- 1 The FDA releases regulations and recommendations to health care facilities regularly, with updates based on public opinion and new scientific data.
- 2 Blood centers must comply with recommendations and regulations or risk losing their right to practice
- 3 The FDA's Blood Product Advisory Committee oversees the Blood Donation Deferment Policy

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How is Pride and Plasma fighting the ban?

- Online Education: The ban is a complicated issue. We work on breaking down the concepts that make up the policy and make them accessible for those without a health care background.
 - Mobilization: We organized a letter writing campaign to congress, our petition, and will have letters drafted to send to the FDA this week. Our campus ambassadors work with student orgs and regional partners
 - Partnerships: We contact blood centers affected by the issue, researchers like the ADVANCE study, media personalities and target the public opinion aspect needed for a change

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Why is this more important than ever?

- 1 We are in the midst of the worst blood shortage in a decade. Facilities do not have enough donations to meet the needs of local facilities
- 2 Pride & Plasma contacted 60 blood centers across the country and asked how the current shortage was impacting their ability to serve patients- and we shared them on our social media pages.

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How do we change the policy?

- 1 Sign our petition- this is the easiest way to show the number of people in support of a change
- 2 Share our content- the majority of the public is not aware of this issue, simply because it does not impact them directly
- 3 Wait for the ADVANCE Study- the study should release results by the end of the year, and present them to the FDA soon after

December 8th, 2022

- 1 The FDA is holding the next meeting of the Blood Products Advisory Committee on December 8th, 2022. If we want to present on public support of a change, we need as many names as possible on our petition.
- 2 The Ban is discriminatory, it's hurting patients and donors, and it is past time for it to be replaced.

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