

Good Morning, I am Dr. Gordon, Medical Director of Northern California Community Blood Bank with a KINS Community Comment on tattoos and donor eligibility.

All of us at the blood bank are aware that many donors who get tattoos frequently have stopped donating because they were always deferred. They were deferred because per AABB standards, tattoos had to be applied at a state regulated entity which used sterile needles and used ink that has not been reused.

For us at the blood bank, the only state regulated entity was a physician office. We felt that there was insufficient state oversight of commercial body art facilities. So a tattoo applied at physician office was acceptable without a deferral. Those applied elsewhere had a 12 month deferral.

Now all of that has changed because of the California Safe Body Art Act which was enacted the 1st of July 2012. This July 2013 marked its first anniversary. In addition to the above requirements, that act requires that body art facilities to register within the county of business, annually renew its health permit from local enforcement agency and maintain the facility in a specified manner. Also they are subject to inspection by county enforcement officers. Practitioners must be updated on OSHA requirements for blood borne pathogens. We feel that tattoo parlors are now state regulated.

So the good news is that donors with tattoos applied at a physician office or a California state regulated facility are eligible to donate and are not deferred for 12 months. However we still have a few other requirements that must be met by donors. The tattoo must be free of any signs of infection or inflammation and it must be one month from the date of the tattoo. If one or both of these are not met, there is one month deferral.

I want to emphasize that a tattoo done at an out of state facility will have a 12 month deferral. So please get your tattoos in CA. Even better get them locally.

We welcome all tattoo enthusiasts and look forward to seeing you soon at the blood bank or at a blood mobile.

Lastly, all of us at Northern California Community Blood Bank want to thank all our generous donors. Without them, we could not provide the blood products that save so many lives. We also extend our appreciation to KINS Community Comment.

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