

March 26, 2021

Senator Mary Daugherty Abrams
Legislative Office Building, Room 3000
Hartford, CT 06106

Representative Jonathan Steinberg
Legislative Office Building, Room 3004
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Support of SB 1083 and HB 6666 including language to address plasma collection issues

Dear Chairpersons Abrams and Steinberg,

The Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF) would like to convey its support for SB 1083 and HB 6666 to include language to address plasma collection issues in the State of Connecticut. This legislation provides the opportunity to update governance of plasma collection facilities in the state, leading to increased source plasma donation in Connecticut. These changes will help to enhance the supply of life-sustaining therapies for patients facing serious medical conditions, including those with primary immunodeficiencies (PI).

IDF is the national patient organization dedicated to improving the diagnosis, treatment, and quality of life of people affected by PI through fostering a community empowered by advocacy, education, and research. Individuals with PI have one of the over 400 rare disorders in which a person's immune system fails to function properly because of genetic or intrinsic defects. In Connecticut alone, there are an estimated 2,700 people diagnosed with PI and many more undiagnosed. Fortunately, most people with PI can live healthy, productive lives if they receive lifelong immunoglobulin (Ig) replacement therapy that replaces the antibodies the body is unable to produce sufficiently. However, because Ig derives from human plasma, it cannot be produced without a continuous supply of source plasma from donors. It takes approximately 130 human plasma donations to produce enough immunoglobulin to treat an adult with PI for a year. As a result, the PI community relies upon an adequate number of plasma donors and donation centers across the country.

Connecticut is currently home to none of these necessary plasma donation centers due to regulations that do not align with the federal standards for plasma collection. These outdated laws place arbitrary restrictions on the collection of plasma in Connecticut, limiting the existence of donation centers in the state. The lack of donation centers in Connecticut creates a reliance on plasma collection elsewhere and contributes to the global plasma supply strain. The need for plasma and plasma-derived products grows each year for the PI community as well as globally, and updating the governance around plasma donation in Connecticut can help address that need.

On behalf of individuals with PI, IDF encourages lawmakers in Connecticut to move forward thoroughly and quickly on the proposed regulatory reforms to facilitate the establishment of an adequate number of plasma donor centers in the state. The expansion of donation centers in the State of Connecticut will help to alleviate the strain on the global plasma supply, which, if gone unaddressed, will continue the trend of an increasing number of Connecticut residents unable to receive this lifesaving therapy.

Some of the most medically vulnerable citizens in the state are suffering because Connecticut and a handful of other states have inadvertently created barriers for plasma collection. The proposed reforms will help solve this issue and provide plasma to those who need it so vitally.

Thank you for considering this important issue. If you have any questions or would like to discuss these issues further, please contact Jamie Sexton, Director of State Policy, at jsexton@primaryimmune.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John G. Boyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John G. Boyle
President & CEO