Thailand to Rethink Gay Blood Donor Ban

April 17, 2008

On April 11, the Red Cross of Thailand said it would change its blood-screening policies to address the concerns of activists who say the process discriminates against gay men, Agence France-Presse/Yahoo News reports (news.yahoo.com, 4/11).

The Red Cross requires that all donors fill out a form to determine their risk of disease. The form includes a question asking men to identify whether or not they have sex with other men. Answering yes could bar men from donating.

Although the Red Cross has not said it would remove the question, it has pledged to revise the form to include more questions about both same-sex and heterosexual behaviors that could increase the risk of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV. It says it will take the answers to these new questions into account before banning an applicant.

“We didn’t mean to hurt anyone," Soisaang Pikulsod, director of the Thai Red Cross National Blood Center, said in the article. “It was just to ensure the highest possible safety of our patients.”

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