His Blood Is Boiling!

Andy Cohen is unable to donate his plasma to help people with COVID-19 because of an outdated policy.

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By Jennifer Morton, Managing Editor

Talk show host Andy Cohen took a moment on a recent episode of his show, Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen, to rant about his frustrations with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) policy that states that men who have sex with men (MSM) can donate blood and plasma only if they have not had sex in the previous three months.

The FDA policy was originally enacted in 1983, in the early days of the AIDS epidemic. Initially, it outright banned blood and plasma donations by MSM. Unlike today, there was no way to screen donated blood for the virus. In 2015, the FDA changed its recommendation to allow MSM to donate if they had not had sex in the past 12 months. This month, the policy was "relaxed" and the required period of abstinence reduced to three months.

Right now, the FDA is looking for individuals who have fully recovered from COVID-19 to donate plasma because their plasma contains antibodies that may help others currently fighting the infection. This plasma is known as convalescent plasma.

Although Cohen is a recent survivor of COVID-19 and is willing to donate his plasma, the outdated FDA policy prevents him from doing so.

"Why are members from my community being excluded from helping out when so many people are sick and dying?" he wonders. "Maybe because we're valuing stigma over science. My blood could save a life, but instead, it's over here boiling."

It’s time to lift the FDA ban completely. Given the critical state of our nation’s blood supply we should be grateful for everyone who is willing and able to donate their blood and plasma—regardless of their sexual orientation.

Watch Cohen’s segment below:

Go to poz.com/tag/coronavirus for our continuing coverage of COVID-19.

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