



JAN 10 2014

Jay E. Menitove, M.D.
Chair, Advisory Committee on Blood
and Tissue Safety and Availability
Community Blood Center
4040 Main Street
Kansas City, MO 64111-2390

Dear Dr. Menitove:

It was a privilege to meet with the Advisory Committee on Blood and Tissue Safety and Availability (ACBTSA) at the December 2013 meeting. I appreciate the leadership you provide and the Committee's thoughtful discussions addressing optimal blood service delivery in the United States in the era of health care reform, the country's blood and tissue all-hazards preparedness and response, the progress of studies established to help inform a possible change in the blood donor deferral policy for men who have sex with men (MSM), and the creation of a national transfusion transmissible infections monitoring system. The Committee's recommendations on these important topics are greatly appreciated.

I am pleased the ACBTSA's subcommittees have made good progress during this past year toward recommending a clear path forward for the Department to support integration of the U.S. blood industry into the fabric of the national health care system in light of health reform. Similarly, as Chair of the HHS Blood, Organ, and Tissue Senior Executive Council, I shall convene the Department's agencies to review the work of the ACBTSA subcommittees on blood and tissue preparedness and response for the United States and consider how best the government can support the essential interactions between the public and private sectors. Along with the continued work of these subcommittees, I anticipate and look forward to reviewing reports from your subcommittee on blood, organ, and tissue informed consent during the general meeting in April 2014.

As this subcommittee work continues, I am forwarding the recommendations to the Secretary for internal discussions with the Operating Divisions within the Department. Please express to the Committee my appreciation for their service and valued recommendations. I look forward to the advancements in blood and tissue product safety and availability for use during future all-hazards preparedness and response.

Sincerely yours,

Howard K. Koh, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Secretary for Health