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August 16, 2002

Open letter to the Blood Collection Community

A recent FDA workshop in Bethesda, Maryland held on August 7 and 8, 2002 addressed the safety and efficacy of methods for reducing pathogens in cellular blood products used in transfusion. At this meeting, the consensus of opinion was that bacterial contamination of platelets represents the largest transfusion transmitted disease risk.

The focus of this meeting was a discussion of inactivation strategies that targeted nucleotides as a means of achieving pathogen reduction. However, it is unclear when such inactivation technologies will be available. Bacterial detection technology, however, is currently available and screening via bacterial culture has been shown to be practical and effective.

In the interim, given the current risk of bacterial contamination of platelets of approximately 1/1000-1/2000 per unit, we call for the blood collection community to immediately initiate a program for detecting the presence of bacteria in units of platelets.

Respectfully,

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