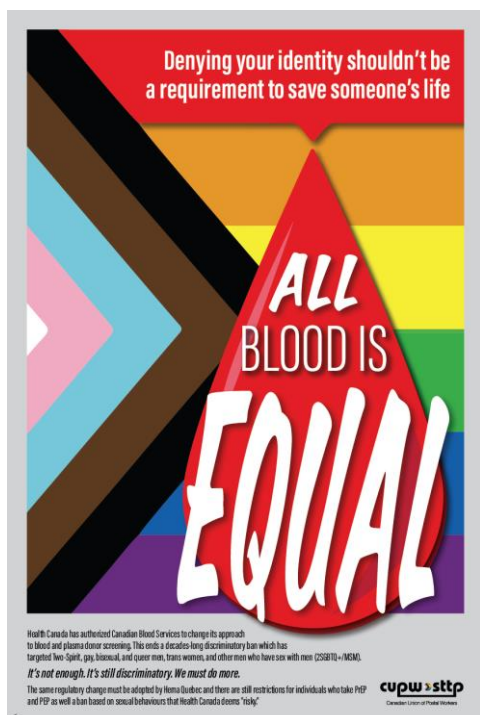


June 1, 2022

## Pride 2022: All Blood is Equal



Pride season is once again upon us! It's a time of celebration and community, but it's also a reminder of the continued struggle for acceptance and equality and that the work is simply not over.

In April, Canadian Blood Services announced that it would be ending its discriminatory practice that restricts men who have sex with men from donating blood. The new policy, which was approved by Health Canada, is to be implemented no later than the end of September.

This is a historic decision that is long overdue. Men who have sex with men were barred from donating blood for life through a policy enacted by the government in 1992. In 2013, the policy evolved to allow a man who had abstained from sex with another man for at least five years to donate. The waiting period dropped to one year, and finally three months in 2019.

The prior rationale for the bans was that men who have sex with men had higher prevalence of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). But advocates and medical experts have for many years argued that this is an outdated and

stigmatizing assumption that does not reflect current risk factors.

Although the end of the blood ban is being celebrated by many, others are less enthusiastic and point out that the new policy will still stigmatize gay and bisexual men and even some transgender people. While the blanket ban for men who have sex with men has been removed, Canadian Blood Services will now screen all donors based on high-risk behaviours, regardless of their gender or sexuality. However, the behaviour that is deemed high risk by the national blood donor organization unfairly targets members of the LGBTQ community. As well, certain restrictions remain for individuals who take PrEP and PEP and Quebec's regulatory agency, Héma-Québec, has yet to update its policy.

For years we've heard of our country's critical shortage of donated blood and that our national blood bank is far below optimal levels. We've been inundated with communications asking us to roll up our sleeves and give blood. Yet, thousands of willing donors are turned away simply because of their identity.

A policy that is less prejudiced than its previous iteration is still prejudiced. All of us deserve the opportunity to donate blood, to potentially save someone's life. That decision shouldn't be taken from us because of prejudice.

CUPW has long participated and supported pride events across the country, and we encourage members to take part in events in their communities and beyond. As you enjoy your Pride celebrations with your co-workers, neighbours, family, and friends, remember that we must continue to fight against prejudice and for equal rights for everyone.

Below is a list of some of the Pride events in communities across the country.

## **Pride Events in your Community**

### **Winnipeg Pride**

May 27- June 5, 2022

<https://pridewinnipeg.com/>

### **Pride Toronto**

June 1 to 30, 2022

<https://www.pridetoronto.com/pride-2022/>

### **Queen City Pride (Regina)**

June 3-12, 2022

<https://queencitypride.ca/>

### **Saskatoon**

June 12-18, 2022

<https://saskatoonpride.ca/>

### **Hamilton**

June 15 to July 6, 2022

<https://www.pridehamilton.com/>

### **Victoria**

June 23 to July 2, 2022

<https://victoriapridesociety.org/pride-2022/>

### **Halifax Pride**

July 14-24, 2022

<https://www.halifaxpride.com/>

### **St. John's Pride**

July 15-July 24, 2022

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnspride/>

### **Pride PEI**

July 16-24, 2022

<https://www.facebook.com/PridePEI>

### **Vancouver Pride**

July 31, 2022

<https://vancouverpride.ca/>

### **Montreal Pride**

August 1-7, 2022

<https://fiertemtl.com/en/>

### **Windsor-Essex Pride**

August 3-7, 2022

<https://www.wepridefest.com/festival/windsor-essex-pride-festival/>

### **Fredericton Pride**

August 13-21, 2022

<https://frederictonpride.com/>

### **Capital Pride**

August 21-28, 2022

<https://capitalpride.ca/>

## **Calgary Pride**

August 27-September 6, 2022

<https://www.calgarypride.ca/>

## **Quebec City Pride**

September 1-4, 2022

<https://fetearcenciel.ca/en/>

In solidarity,



Jan Simpson

National President

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