

Advocates: ban pay-for-plasma in B.C.

Concerned about safety and integrity of Canada's voluntary blood system, BC Health Coalition calls for BC law stopping pay-for-plasma company from operating in the province

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Vancouver -- The BC Health Coalition is calling on B.C. to follow Ontario and Quebec's lead and ban the sale of blood and plasma following news that the private company Canadian Plasma Resources (CPR) wants to open up shop in the province.

CPR – the same company that tried to open clinics in Ontario until the province passed legislation forbidding companies from paying people for their plasma in 2014 – says that B.C. is “top of our list” to expand operations.

“A private, for-profit blood system raises serious safety concerns,” says Rick Turner, BC Health Coalition co-chair. “Allowing this company, or any other, to pay donors for plasma conflicts with the recommendations of the four-year inquiry into the tainted blood tragedy that infected over 30,000 Canadians with HIV and Hepatitis C.”

The Krever inquiry into the 1980's tainted blood scandal recommended that in order to prevent another tainted blood tragedy, Canada should not allow donors to be paid for plasma and should ensure that the core functions of the national blood system be performed by a single operator and not contracted out to others.

Turner points out that if Canada did permit a paid plasma system, we would be one of very few countries that allow the discredited practice. The sale of organs, tissue, sperm, eggs and embryos are all prohibited in Canada.

“B.C. needs to enact our own legislation banning the sale of blood and plasma as soon as possible in order to safeguard the health of Canadians and the integrity of our voluntary blood donation system,” says Turner.

A publicly-regulated, not-for-profit voluntary blood and plasma donation system is recommended by leading health organizations including the World Health Organization, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society, and the European Blood Alliance.

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