

**Date: 18 December 2020**

**By email:**

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**Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz**

**Sektion VIII - Gesundheitssystem**

**Abteilung VIII1c – Arzneimittel, Medizinprodukte, Blut**

**Zu Händen Frau Mag.a. Martina Brix-Zuleger**

**Radetzkygasse 1**

**A-1030 Wien**

**SUBJECT: Call to include plasma center staff in vaccination prioritization plans**

Dear Mag. Brix-Zuleger

The Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association (PPTA) would like to ask you to consider including plasma donation center employees and employees in plasma derived medicinal products (PDMPs) production plants into COVID-19 vaccine prioritization plans. There continues to be a critical need for plasma donation, and it is essential that the complex, global supply chain to manufacture PDMPs is preserved to ensure access for the patients who depend on it. In this regard, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) recognized in their recent publication<sup>1</sup> *that staff working in establishments that collect substances of human origin (SoHO) should be considered, alongside with other healthcare professionals, for the vaccination priority group to ensure continuity of SoHO supply.*

PPTA represents manufacturers of PDMPs and plasma donation centers. Plasma is donated from healthy, eligible donors and then manufactured through a lengthy (7-12 month) process called fractionation into PDMPs that treat a range of conditions, such as immune deficiencies and chronic neurological diseases. Plasma for further manufacture is essential to meet the clinical needs of patients, as these therapies are often the only way to treat these lifelong conditions.

PPTA reaches out to you as a representative of one of the four countries in Europe (Austria, Germany, Hungary and the Czech Republic) where a plasma collection system is well established as well as a good balance between the private and the public sector. In 2019, Austria collected around 500.000 liter of plasma and contributed significantly to plasma collection in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> [Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) and supply of substances of human origin in the EU/EEA](#)

It is important that plasma donation center employees and production employees, all of whom are involved in the collection and manufacturing process of these lifesaving therapies, are protected as they may be exposed to SARS-CoV-2. PPTA would like to thank you for recognizing these groups as essential infrastructure earlier this year. This clarification allowed the continuity in collection and manufacturing of lifesaving therapies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The clinical need for plasma protein therapies has been steadily increasing for many years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the need has not diminished, although plasma donation centers have experienced significant declines in collection<sup>2</sup>. Reported declines may be attributed to the impacts of social distancing measures and other mobility restrictions. Any continued decline in plasma donations could impact patients' ability to access their lifesaving therapies even more so, therefore PPTA is appealing to authorities to support the urgent need for plasma donations.

EU Commissioner for Health, Stella Kyriakides confirmed in her statement on World Blood Donor Day<sup>3</sup> that plasma for the development of PDMPs is essential.

We appreciate your consideration for COVID-19 vaccine prioritization to employees of plasma donation centers and plasma production facilities and remain at your disposal for any further inquiries.

Respectfully,

Alexa Wetzel

PPTA Director Source Europe

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<sup>2</sup> Cherney, Mike. "Coronavirus Pandemic Slashes Donations of Lifesaving Plasma." Wall Street Journal, August 19, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT\\_20\\_1062](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_20_1062)