

HAND-DELIVERED

February 3, 2014

The Honorable Representative Ed Henry
Room 427-H
State House
11 S. Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130

Reference: Letter of Support for House Bill 255, Relating to Age to Donate Plasma

Dear Representative Henry:

It was great to meet two weeks ago. I want to thank you for sponsoring House Bill 255 which will allow 18 year-olds to donate plasma in Alabama. We support this bill because plasma donations are the essential starting material for life-saving medicines known as plasma protein therapies.

The Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association (PPTA) represents the world's leading manufacturers of plasma-derived and recombinant biological therapies, collectively known as plasma protein therapies, and the collectors of source plasma. These critical therapies are infused or injected by more than 1 million people worldwide to treat a variety of rare, life threatening diseases and serious medical disorders. PPTA members produce in excess of 80 percent of the plasma protein therapies used in the United States today.

Plasma is donated at more than 500 plasma donation centers in the United States and Europe, including 14 in Alabama. In most of the states, healthy individuals are able to donate plasma when they are 18 years of age or older. In Alabama and Nebraska, because of their age of majority laws, the minimum age to donate plasma is 19.

Plasma is often referred to as the "gift of life" because it is the essential starting material needed to manufacture plasma protein therapies that help people with rare, chronic conditions live healthier, productive, and fulfilling lives. The following plasma protein therapies are manufactured from donated plasma.

- **Clotting Factors**—People with bleeding disorders, such as hemophilia, have a condition in which the ability of the blood to clot is severely reduced. As a result a minor injury may result in internal bleeding, joint and organ damage and even death. Additionally, there is a percentage of people with hemophilia that develop antibodies to clotting factors for which additional plasma therapies may be of benefit.
- **Immunoglobulin**—There are more than 150 primary immune deficiency disorders (PIDD). These individuals have improperly functioning immune

systems and do not respond to traditional antibiotics. Without immunoglobulins, they are exposed to frequent and often serious infections.

- **Alpha-1 Antitrypsin**—Alpha-1 deficiency is more commonly known as genetic emphysema. It is a heredity condition that may result in serious lung disease in adults and lung and/or liver disease in both children and adults.
- **Albumin**—Albumin is used to treat burns, trauma patients and surgical patients.
- **Hyperimmunoglobulins**—These lifesaving therapies are used to treat rabies, tetanus, dialysis patients and organ transplant recipients. They are also used to treat pregnant women who have Rh incompatibility, a condition where the mother and fetus have incompatible blood that can lead to serious injury to the unborn child or even death.

Plasma collected at donation centers in Alabama and across the United States is used in a complex manufacturing process to produce life-saving plasma-derived medicines. It takes many donations to manufacture the plasma protein therapies that are used to treat an individual with a rare, chronic condition that requires plasma protein replacement. It is estimated that it takes 130 donations to produce enough immunoglobulin to treat an adult with primary immune deficiency for a year. For someone with alpha-one antitrypsin deficiency or hemophilia, the estimated number of donations needed for one year of therapy exceeds 900. For this reason, it is essential that willing healthy donors be able to donate.

Your bill ensures this will be the case in Alabama. This is why we are proud to support your bill. Please let us know if we can assist in any way to achieve the passage of your important legislation. I may be reached at or 443-433-1110 or bspeir@pptaglobal.org.

Best Regards



Bill Speir
Director of State Affairs