

INFORMATION FOR PHYSICIANS REGARDING THE HIV-1 LOOKBACK PROGRAM OF LIFESTREAM

Some blood donors newly identified with HIV infection (confirmed positive for antibody and/or positive NAT) have given blood in the past. The likelihood that an earlier donation was infectious depends on how it was screened for HIV, and the interval between the earlier donation and the test-positive donation. Your patient received such a blood component that is now the subject of a “Lookback” investigation, required by federal regulation.

The recipient should be informed of his or her potential exposure to HIV as a result of the transfusion and offered appropriate evaluation to determine whether or not HIV infection occurred. The following key points may be helpful in your discussion with the patient:

- Lookback investigations are required by the federal government as a precaution for patients who might have been exposed to HIV through transfusion, so that if they were infected they can be diagnosed quickly and treated promptly.
- The transfusions investigated in the Lookback program were collected from donors who are fully qualified, tested and negative with all of the blood screening tests for HIV in use at the time. It is NOT at all certain that the transfusions were infected.
- California law does not permit testing for HIV without the consent of the individual to be tested. HIV testing results are confidential and they cannot be given to unauthorized third parties without written permission of the patient.
- Until the transfusion recipient is tested and shown to be negative, it may be best to take precautions to prevent HIV transmission to others.

If you have any questions or would like to have a copy of the federal regulations describing the Lookback program, please feel free to contact the Medical Surveillance Department at LifeStream, Monday through Friday at (909) 885-6503 extension 655.