



**American
Red Cross**

FAST FACTS...

Blood Donors – Tattoos/Body Art

New law eliminates deferral for new tattoos and body piercings

BACKGROUND: *Blood transfused in Michigan comes from **volunteer donors**, who want to share the gift of life. The federal government sets rules for **blood donor eligibility** – and **temporarily defers** donors for many reasons. In Michigan, people who have gotten tattoos - or have had their bodies pierced - are **currently deferred for a year**. The deferral is because tattoo shops have **no required health standards**, and customers may be put at risk to develop infections such as hepatitis.*

- 1) On December 13 Gov. Jennifer Granholm **signed legislation** that will require body art shops to meet safety standards in 2009.
- 2) Blood donors receiving new tattoos or body piercings in state-licensed facilities will be eligible to donate blood right away, rather than having to wait a year under current FDA rules.
- 3) Here in Michigan:
 - a. Fewer than **5%** of eligible donors give blood, yet almost **70%** of all people will need blood in their lifetimes.
 - b. Some high school and college drives report that **about half of donors** have new tattoos or body piercings.
 - c. Up to now, these donors currently cannot donate blood for a year; **with the new law**, these **donors will be able to give immediately beginning in 2009**.
 - d. We estimate that the number of donors deferred by tattoos may be as **high as 5,000 annually**.
 - e. People can donate whole blood up to 6 times-a-year -- the amount of **blood we can potentially collect because of the new state law could be as high as 30,000 units**.
- 4) American Red Cross Blood Services **thanks the governor, state house and senate for enacting this important new legislation**.