

June 29, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

On June 15, The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) closed the borders to Mexican citizens choosing to voluntarily donate blood plasma. On behalf of the Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF), I am writing to urge that you freeze any activities that threaten to severely limit our community's access to life-sustaining plasma-derived medications.

IDF advocates on behalf of all Americans impacted by primary immunodeficiencies (PI). Individuals with PI have one of more than 400 rare disorders in which a person's immune system fails to function properly because of genetic or intrinsic defects. These individuals face far greater risk of infection from viruses, bacteria and pathogens than those with a fully functioning immune system. There are an estimated 250,000 people diagnosed with PI in the United States, and many more go undiagnosed.

Fortunately, most people with PI can live healthy, productive lives if they receive lifelong immunoglobulin (Ig) therapy that replaces the antibodies the body is unable to produce sufficiently. Without such medications, people will be unable to fend off infections, which for many mean hospitalizations, severe complications and potentially death.

Plasma donations are essential to Ig therapy as Ig is made from human plasma, and it cannot be produced without a continuous supply of source plasma from donors. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated plasma shortages.¹ **Simply put, any actions that place pressure on an already strained market will have serious consequences.**

We are very troubled by reports that CBP will no longer permit Mexican nationals holding B1/B2 tourist visas to enter the United States to donate plasma. This action could reduce plasma supply used to make lifesaving therapies by 5 to 10 percent. If these changes are implemented,

¹ See <https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/safety-availability-biologics/information-about-immune-globulin-human-product-shortage>

we will see further pressure on the supply of plasma that will jeopardize the health of Americans with PI and other conditions.

To address this, we ask that the Department freeze this implementation and respectfully request a meeting with IDF representatives and other stakeholders to ensure that the negative consequences of such action are understood.

Independent of this particular action, IDF is active in state and federal advocacy efforts addressing plasma donation barriers and educating the public on the need and value to our community. We encourage you to visit IDF's [Plasma Hero website](#), which highlights our commitment to the need for plasma and the importance of donors.

Thank you in advance for your timely attention to this request and I hope that we can connect soon to address the urgency of this situation. Please have your staff contact me at lalbizo@primaryimmune.org, to ensure this critical issue can be discussed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn H. Albizo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lynn H. Albizo, JD
Vice President of Public Policy