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Even In The Wake Of The Orlando Tragedy, Gay Men Are Prohibited From Giving Blood

BY AIVI NGUYEN • JUNE 14, 2016

As we learn more about the horrific hate-crime that happened at Orlando's gay nightclub, Pulse, on Saturday night, killing at least 50 and injuring more, the country is banding together in support of the victims and their families. One way that people are showing their solidarity with the victims is by giving blood.

Because the attack was targeted at a gay club, it makes sense that the LGBTQ community would feel compelled to offer support and want to give blood. However, gay or bisexual men are prohibited from giving blood according to FDA regulations.

The regulations provide that any "man who has had sex with another man during the past 12 months" or any "female who has had sex during the past 12 months with a man who has had sex with another man in the past 12 months" should be deferred from giving blood for a year.

The regulation stems from the belief that gay men are more likely to be HIV positive. This begs the question of whether the stigmatization of gay men is actually perpetuated institutionally on a nationwide scale. It is not as if the FDA created the regulations years ago and simply neglected to update them. [These rules were updated in late 2015](#). Prior to the update, sexually active gay men were barred from donating blood for life.