THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

BLOOD DONOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION GUIDELINES

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Abbreviations

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV - Anti-retrovirals
BDC - Blood Donation Center
BDP - Blood Donation Programme
BDR - Blood Donor Recruiter
CDC - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
DED - District Executive Director
FBO - Faith-based Organization
FOPAD - Foundation for People Promotion and Awareness
HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFRC - The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
MoEC - Ministry of Education and Culture
MoH & SW - Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MoH - Ministry of Health
MOU - Memorandum of Understanding
HMIS - Health Management Information System
NBTS - National Blood Transfusion Services
NGO - Non-Governmental Organization
RAS - Regional Administrative Secretary
SOPs - Standard Operating Procedures
STI - Sexually transmitted Infection
TRCS - Tanzania Red Cross Society
UNAIDS - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
USAID - United States Agency for International Development
WHO - World Health Organization
Foreword

The establishment of a nationally coordinated Blood Transfusion Services is a result of the Ministry of Health’s recognition of importance of maintaining a safe and adequate supply of blood for transfusion. Availability of safe blood and blood products also is one of the government’s strategies aimed at combating the spread of HIV infection.

Therefore the MoH through its ongoing comprehensive health sector reforms has identified Blood safety as one of the strategic priority aimed at meeting the health demands of our country.

Blood Transfusion Service is a sensitive discipline with wide diversity of activities, ranging from blood donor recruitment and retention, blood collection, processing, distribution, training on appropriate use of blood and its components and research-work. Such a discipline cannot be left to run at ad hoc basis without clear guidelines and policy development.

The ultimate aim of these guidelines on blood donor recruitment and retention is to provide guidance in achieving uniform and standardized ways of recruitment and retention of blood donors. Active recruitment is therefore necessary to ensure that adequate amounts of blood reach the nation's blood banks and ultimately the intended end-users.

It is hoped that they will provide the whole service with strategies to implement this important function and therefore contribute to the availability of safe blood to Tanzanians. We expect that other potential stakeholders with interest in the area of blood transfusion will find these guidelines useful and will use them in their work.

I acknowledge and appreciate the dedication of all technical experts, local and international partners who contributed in the development of National guidelines for blood donor recruitment and retention for Tanzania.

Above all I would like to thank all Tanzanians who voluntarily come forward to give their blood in order to save the lives of other fellow Tanzanians.

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Introduction

Only 20 percent or less of blood donated in Tanzania is from voluntary, non-remunerated donors. Most blood is collected from family members or friends in the so-called replacement model. Replacement donors may not be safe since they are under pressure to donate and may not share their risky medical or social history to blood donor recruiters during health screening. A good system of recruitment and retention will reduce this reliance on donors who may be high risk and promote economic collection of much safer blood.

Recruitment of suitable donors is one of the most important functions of a blood transfusion service, but often blood donor recruitment is the most difficult function due to cultural and religious beliefs. In addition to this, HIV/AIDS has made potential donors reluctant to donate blood lest they are discovered to be positive during the testing.

The recruitment and retention activities must therefore educate low-risk donors so that they understand the need for donating blood voluntarily and assure them of personal safety and confidentiality in taking this action.

Blood donor recruitment shall be coordinated nationally as an integral component of the blood transfusion services.

The blood policies of the Ministry of Health (Tanzania Mainland) and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (Zanzibar), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), emphasize voluntary, non-remunerated, repeat donations from pools of low-risk and well-informed donors. Hence, the need for guidelines is pertinent to provide guidance in achieving uniform and standardized ways of recruitment and retention of blood donors.

This document will encompass all activities by the NBTS and other partners that are expected to result into increased enrolment in the number of safe, voluntary non remunerated repeat blood donors.
Objectives:

1. To identify pools of low risk blood donors for targeting as source of safe blood.
2. To maintain a pool of safe repeat blood donors.
3. To foster cooperation with other stakeholders in the field of blood donation recruitment and retention

Strategies:

The following recruitment and retention strategies shall be used to meet the objectives above:

Objective 1:
To identify communities of low risk blood donors for targeting as sources of safe blood

Strategies:

1. Blood donor recruiters shall be trained to be educators, promoters, organizers and facilitators.
2. Community mobilization and sensitization with formal and informal leadership shall be organized.
3. Education campaigns shall be conducted for different groups i.e youth (in and out of school), adults, community, influential people, political and religious leaders.
4. Promotion of blood donation shall aim at one to one communication, traditional media, involvement of different groups, Modern communication and information, and international and national events.

Activities

- Conduct training for blood donor recruiters/organizers.
- Conduct meetings with the existing formal leadership.
- Distribution of IEC materials.
- Conduct pre donation talk to different groups
- Conduct pre and post donation counseling
- Conduct one to one communication
- Establish folk media groups to convey messages about blood donor recruitment.
- Conduct open air campaigns
- Disseminate information during international and national events.
- Develop for the media appropriate educational and promotional key messages.
- Initiate and support pre donor clubs.
- Developing special promotional packages for special groups
Objective 2:  
To maintain a pool of safe repeat blood donors

Strategies:
2.1. Establishment of blood donor clubs that shall aim at retaining blood donors.
2.2. Provide support to donor clubs whose membership shall be open to different groups and individuals who actually donate or would donate in the future.
2.3. Maintain a special register with all contact information for rare blood types so that they can be tracked or contacted easily when needed.
2.4. Continuing education, sensitization, training and promotion for the retained blood donors.
2.5. Provision of rewards and incentives.
2.6. Building long-term relationship, respect and courtesy to donors.

Activities:
- Initiate and support post blood donor clubs.
- Follow up donors through home visits, telephone and mail.
- Maintain good relationship with blood donors e.g. sharing of information etc.
- Recognize the outstanding contribution of blood donors by giving them badges, t-shirts, exercise books, pens etc.
- Maintain a register of all blood donors so that they can easily be tracked.
- Prepare and organize field/study visits.
- Organize blood donor camps.
- Initiate recreational activities e.g. sports.
- Conduct health education.

Objective 3:  
To foster cooperation and network with other stakeholders in the field of blood donation recruitment and retention

Strategies:
3.1. NBTS shall collaborate and network with all partners in blood donation activities.
3.2. All stakeholders shall collaborate with government and non-government at all levels in recruiting and retaining blood donors.

Activities:
- Attend meetings on blood transfusion.
- Share experiences and information on blood recruitment and retention.
- Encourage integration of activities with other stakeholders.
- Participate in planning and development of materials on blood recruitment and retention.
Note: Choice of a recruitment or retention strategy will depend on the target population. It is very important that whatever strategy is used it is convenient, appropriate and acceptable to the target population.