

Lisa Studdert
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[REDACTED]

Dear Ms Studdert *Lisa,*

SELF-TESTING FOR HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) IN AUSTRALIA

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on whether there should be a review of the policy on the role of HIV self-testing in Australia. The NBA supports any activity that would lead to an improvement in HIV testing rates in Australia to reduce the prevalence of undiagnosed HIV and potentially reduce the safety of the blood supply in Australia. However, it would not change the current testing regime of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, which utilises reliable nucleic acid testing.

As you would be aware, there are some issues associated with HIV self-testing including the sensitivity and specificity of the test, the response of the individual with a positive diagnosis when not under the direct care of a physician, and ensuring compliance with reporting as a notifiable disease. However, I am not in a position to comment on the relative risks and benefits. I suggest that these are explored as part of the review of the policy through working with the clinical community including the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine to determine the best approach for Australia into the future.

Yours sincerely



Leigh McJames
General Manager

16 April 2014

File Ref: E13/661

Cc: Julianne Quaine
First Assistant Secretary
Office of Health Protection
Department of Health