INFORMED CONSENT FOR TRANSFUSION
NZBS POLICY

REASON FOR ISSUE: Include private hospitals in the responsibility to provide systems for documenting informed consent.

1. DEFINITION

The code of Health and Disability Services Consumers Rights 1996 provides consumers with rights to information. The benefits, risks and unwanted effects of receiving a transfusion of blood and blood products in New Zealand need to be discussed in a way that is consistent with these rights.

2. SCOPE

The New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 identifies that NZBS is responsible for the provision of blood transfusion services in New Zealand. This policy refers to all instances in which blood or blood products are transfused within New Zealand and outlines the mechanisms that NZBS will put in place to ensure that the requirements of the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers Rights 1996 are fulfilled in respect of transfusion.

3. BACKGROUND

A number of elements require to be fulfilled in order to ensure that potential recipients of blood and blood products are able to make an informed decision in respect of their treatment. The key elements are:

The provision of information on the blood component or blood product that will be used in the management of the potential recipient. Information will be provided in a comprehensible format. This should identify the appropriate uses, risks and unwanted effects of the blood component or blood product. NZBS will take responsibility for provision of this information.

Consideration of the benefits that will arise from transfusion of the blood component or product. An understanding of the clinical status of the potential recipient is required thus permitting a discussion on the balance of benefit and risk to the individual. This is the responsibility of the clinician that prescribes the blood component or blood product.

The provision of systems to document that the potential recipient has been informed of the benefits and potential risks associated with administration of the blood component or blood product. This will be the responsibility of the District Health Board or Private Hospital where the transfusion will be given. In the context of blood products prescribed by Private Practitioners NZBS will ensure that information supplied with the product identifies the requirement for informed consent. NZBS will provide a form for use outside of the hospital setting.

Documentation that informed consent has been given by the potential recipient (or the legitimate surrogate). This will involve obtaining the signature of the potential recipient. This is the responsibility of the health care professional who obtains the informed consent.

4. POLICY

NZBS will take responsibility for ensuring that systems to support informed consent for transfusion of blood components and blood products are established. This responsibility will be met by:

The provision of information for potential recipients that clearly outlines the appropriate use, risks and unwanted effects of transfusion of blood components and blood products.

Include a requirement that appropriate systems for informed consent are in place as part of the contractual agreement to supply blood components and blood products.

Undertake regular audits of DHB (and Private Hospital) transfusion systems to document the existence of appropriate systems to support obtaining of informed consent are in place and are being complied with.