PPTA Responds to ProPublica Article

An article published by ProPublica on June 24 (“The U.S. Is Closing a Loophole That Lured Mexicans Over the Border to Donate Blood Plasma for Cash”) is the latest sensationalized reporting from ProPublica and ARD German TV reporters who continue to misrepresent and malign U.S. policies regarding plasma donation as well as the scores of committed individuals who cross the U.S.-Mexico border to donate their plasma. Tens of thousands of people safely donate their plasma every day in the U.S., with every donation directly contributing to helping nearly 125,000 Americans with serious and often life-threatening conditions live healthy and normal lives, as well as countless others facing trauma and emergency medical needs every day.

PPTA and its member companies, as well as national and international patient advocacy organizations and the individuals they represent, feel the action taken last week by U.S. Customs and Border Protection to reverse a longstanding policy regarding permissible activities by Mexican nationals with B1/B2 visas was improper. We are engaged in discussions with the Biden Administration and other officials to understand the intent of the change and to explain the devastating consequences to patients’ lives, should it remain in place.

Plasma protein therapies, derived from donated plasma, replace missing or deficient proteins for the millions of people worldwide with these conditions. Without these treatments, many patients would either not be able to survive or would have a substantially diminished quality of life and productivity. Plasma protein therapies are truly unique, lifesaving biologic medicines.

Plasma donor safety is of paramount concern to PPTA and all its members. All plasma donation centers, whether located in the U.S. or in the European Union, adhere to strict regulations that ensure everyone who wants to donate their plasma is healthy enough to do so. All regulations ensure donors’ safety and the safety and efficacy of the therapies upon which patients rely.

Considering the nearly 20 percent decline in plasma donations seen nationwide in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, our collective focus – including that of the news media – should be on encouraging plasma donation by all those willing to roll up their sleeves and donate, not perpetuating salacious, anecdotal, and often incorrect information that will only further delay a recovery in much-needed donations and potentially harm patients.