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Association of Ringside Physicians Consensus Statement On Blood-Borne Infectious Disease Screening in Combat Sports

The Association of Ringside Physicians (ARP), an international, non-profit organization dedicated to the health and safety of the boxer and mixed martial arts athlete, has released a consensus statement on blood-borne infectious disease screening in combat sports as follows:

1. All commissions and sanctioning bodies should test athletes for the infectious diseases Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B (Hep B), and Hepatitis C (Hep C) before allowing them to be licensed and before allowing them to compete.
2. This testing be done at least every 180 days in active participants. Valid photo identification and verification of the athlete's identity should be required at the time of testing.
3. Only blood tests done by drawing blood from a vein are acceptable (often called "serum blood test" or "venous blood draw"). Mouth swabs, finger sticks, or other types of "rapid" tests are not acceptable. This testing should consist of the following three specific blood laboratory tests*:
 - **HIV:** HIV 1/2 serum Ab (HIV 1/2 antibodies, EIA, with confirmation, CPT Code 86703)
 - **Hepatitis B:** HBsAg (Hepatitis B surface antigen, CPT Code 87340)
 - **Hepatitis C:** HCAb (Hepatitis C antibody, CPT Code 86803)
4. A positive HIV antibody should preclude the athlete from fighting competitively.
5. Additional testing for HIV antigen in addition to the HIV1/2 antibodies is encouraged. A positive HIV antigen should preclude the athlete from fighting competitively.
6. A positive Hepatitis B surface antigen should preclude the athlete from fighting competitively.
7. A positive Hepatitis C antibody should preclude the athlete from fighting competitively UNLESS the following conditions are met:
 - Documented proof of completed treatment received for the disease, including complete medical records if requested
 - At least 3 consecutive negative viral load blood tests (Hepatitis C quantitative RNA viral load, CPT 87521) within a 6 month period INCLUDING one within 2 weeks of the bout
 - A letter of clearance to fight from a Physician specializing in Infectious Disease, preferably specialty board certified
 - Medical clearance by the commission's medical director or reviewing physician

*Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) is a code set maintained by the American Medical Association designed to communicate uniform information to report procedures and diagnostic services to entities such as physicians, health insurance companies and accreditation organizations. They are provided here for laboratory convenience and accuracy in ordering the proper tests.

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