



**American
Red Cross**

BCA
Blood Centers
OF AMERICA



March 7, 2016

The American Red Cross, Blood Centers of America, and America's Blood Centers, issued the following joint statement regarding the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announcement of blood product shipments to Puerto Rico in response to the Zika virus outbreak on the island:

“Through the support of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the American Red Cross, Blood Centers of America, and America's Blood Centers are providing additional shipments of blood products from the continental United States to Puerto Rico to ensure the safety and availability of the blood supply for the island during an outbreak of Zika virus. On the mainland, there is currently no local transmission of Zika from mosquitoes.

The Red Cross, Blood Centers of America, and America's Blood Centers have adequate inventory to meet the needs in Puerto Rico as well as the needs of our hospital partners in the continental U.S. Blood is routinely provided where it's needed most across the country.

Within the coming week, the Red Cross and members of Blood Centers of America and America's Blood Centers will have completed implementation of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's guidance to reduce the risk of transfusion-transmission of Zika virus. This guidance is in addition to previously applied recommendations of AABB, which asked blood donors who have traveled to Mexico, the Caribbean, or Central or South America to refrain from donating, or postpone their blood or platelet donations until four weeks after their return to the continental U.S. We also ask that if a donor does donate and subsequently develops symptoms consistent with Zika virus infection within two weeks of that donation, that he or she immediately notify that blood center so that we can quarantine the product.

Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood, and that need can only be met through the generosity of volunteer donors. Eligible individuals are always encouraged to give blood or platelets. Visit redcrossblood.org or americasblood.org to make an appointment to donate.”

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