

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AMERICANS URGED TO DONATE BLOOD TO MAINTAIN ADEQUACY OF BLOOD SUPPLY AMID CORONAVIRUS CONCERNS

Bethesda, Md. – As the coronavirus outbreak continues to spread in the United States, the AABB Interorganizational Task Force on Domestic Disasters and Acts of Terrorism is urging individuals to make and keep donation appointments and organized blood drives to ensure the continued adequacy of the blood supply.

It is imperative that healthy individuals donate to minimize disruptions to the blood supply and ensure blood is available for patients. If the outbreak of coronavirus expands, additional challenges may arise, which could potentially reduce the number of eligible donors and disrupt collection events. Since it is the blood already on the shelves that saves lives, maintaining a sufficient blood supply is essential to ensure patients in need receive optimal treatment.

“We are asking potential donors, both current and first-timers, to make and keep appointments to ensure that a sufficient blood supply will continue to be available for all patients who need it,” said Brian G. Gannon, chair of the Task Force. “Making a blood donation now, or scheduling a donation for the near future, will help to maintain the adequacy of the nation’s blood supply.”

Those interested in donating blood or platelets may contact the following organizations to find a local collection site and to schedule an appointment:

- AABB: www.aabb.org; +1.301.907.6977
- America’s Blood Centers: www.americasblood.org; +1.202.393.5725
- American Red Cross: www.redcrossblood.org; +1.800.RED CROSS (+1.800.733.2767)
- Armed Services Blood Program: www.militaryblood.dod.mil; +1.703.681.8024

As more cases of coronavirus have been reported in the U.S., the blood community has been increasing its preparedness appropriately. The Task Force will continue to monitor the ongoing spread of coronavirus and will provide additional updates if blood needs change.

About the Task Force

The Task Force was formed in January 2002 to help make certain that blood collection efforts resulting from domestic disasters and acts of terrorism are managed properly and to deliver clear and consistent messages to the public regarding the status of America’s blood supply. The Task Force is composed of representatives from U.S. blood services, associations and commercial entities, as well as liaisons from governmental agencies, who work together in an effort to ensure that safe and adequate blood product inventories are in place at all times in preparation for disasters. In addition, the Task Force operates as a mechanism to assess the need for collections and/or transportation of blood should a disaster occur.

AABB serves as the designated coordinating entity for the Task Force. In addition to AABB, members include AdvaMed, America's Blood Centers, American Hospital Association, American Red Cross, Blood Centers of America, College of American Pathologists, National Marrow Donor Program/Be The Match and the Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association. Liaisons from the following government agencies also participate in task force discussions: Armed Services Blood Program and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which includes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Food and Drug Administration.

In the event of an emergency, AABB immediately convenes a meeting of Task Force representatives. Local blood center(s) are responsible for ascertaining medical needs based on casualty estimates using pre-determined formulas, assessing available local supply, and communicating that information to the Task Force.

In a disaster, the first priorities of the Task Force are to:

- Verify and communicate to the blood community the medical need for blood;
- Identify sites with existing excess blood inventory;
- Determine the need, if any, for blood shipment and the logistics of such shipments; and
- Develop public messages and facilitate the discussion of donor issues.

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