



Support the Ongoing Need for Blood and Blood Donors

Our nation's blood supply is reliant upon independent, community-based blood centers across the United States (U.S.) who collect 60 percent of the blood used by patients each year. These blood centers have remained resilient throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, weathering a series of significant challenges that have required adaptation of traditional models for collecting blood and significant investments in blood center workforce and essential supplies.

The majority of independent, community-based blood centers are currently able to meet patient needs. However, a lack of elasticity in the blood supply means additional pressures such as weather events, mass casualties, and future waves of illness resulting in prolonged donor and worker absenteeism could result in local shortages. With only three percent of Americans donating blood each year, the need for a continuous and diverse base of individuals willing to roll-up their sleeves and give of themselves is significant.

The availability of blood components for transfusion is essential to the nation's health care system. Every two seconds in the U.S., someone needs blood. A wide range of patients depend on blood transfusions, including new mothers experiencing complications during delivery, patients with cancer who require blood as part of their regular treatment regimen, individuals with sickle cell disease who require ongoing blood transfusions to remain healthy, trauma victims who experience significant blood loss, patients who require surgery and need blood to ensure a healthy recovery, and many others.

The traditional means of collecting blood at school and business-based mobile events has been severely impacted by COVID-19. To meet this challenge and maximize their available workforce, blood centers are transitioning their focus to the more than 800 fixed-donation sites across the country. However, this process is hampered by significant costs and regulation necessitating action and support.

In addition to collection challenges, blood centers are faced with significant workforce and supply shortages. While blood centers are not health care providers (as they simply collect blood from healthy donors), they compete with the rest of the health care industry for workers and supplies. Significant shortages of essential supplies such as blood collection kits, blood sample tubes, gloves, and sterilizing arm scrubs significantly impact a blood center's ability to collect a sufficient blood supply and directly impact patient care.

We greatly appreciate the interest and support of the nation's blood supply and suggest the following actions to further ensure a safe and continuous blood supply is available for all patients in need:

- include blood centers in workforce programs aimed at attracting and retaining essential staff;
- prioritize blood center access to critical supplies;
- support critical blood center infrastructure investments; and
- encourage constituents to make an appointment to visit their local blood center and #GiveWhereYouLive as well as commit to #2in2022 by donating at least twice in 2022.

Individuals can find an independent, community blood center near them at www.americasblood.org.