



**America's Blood Centers**<sup>®</sup>  
It's About *Life.*

1717 K Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: 202-393-5725 | Fax: 202-899-2621

[www.AmericasBlood.org](http://www.AmericasBlood.org)

February 23, 2023

Representative Jennifer Carlson  
Chair  
Human Services Committee  
Montana House of Representatives  
PO Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Dear Representative Carlson:

America's Blood Centers is expressing strong opposition to Montana House Bill 645, "Prohibit Donations of Certain Blood and Blood Products." This bill will endanger patients' lives and the necessary access to care in Montana that this legislative body has worked hard to ensure.

America's Blood Centers is the national organization bringing together community-based, independent blood centers. Our member organizations provide close to 60 percent of the U.S. blood supply to serve more than 150 million people, including providing blood to patients in Montana.

A safe and available blood supply is essential to support Montana's healthcare system. Blood transfusions save lives every day, including actively bleeding patients experiencing trauma and hemorrhage resulting from childbirth, as well as patients undergoing a broad array of surgeries which require available blood products to ensure patient safety in case of blood loss. For obstetric patients, the availability of blood products may be the difference between life and death should hemorrhage occur, and transfusions are often required for cancer patients, because of their disease and/or its treatment, either for quality of life during grueling treatment regimens or to allow for continuation of life saving treatments.

There is no medical reason to prohibit blood donation from individuals who have received COVID-19 vaccination, and there is no scientific evidence that demonstrates adverse outcomes from the transfusions of blood products collected from vaccinated donors. Blood donations from individuals who have received a COVID-19 vaccine approved or authorized for use in the U.S. are safe for transfusion. On multiple occasions, the Food and Drug Administration has confirmed that there is no evidence to support concerns related to the safety of blood donated by vaccinated individuals. All blood collection organizations in the U.S. are required to follow Food and Drug Administration guidelines and regulations to collect, process and distribute blood products for patients in need.

If passed, HB 645 would leave patients in Montana without access to blood, severely impacting the care they are able to receive. According to the CDC, 78.1 percent of adults 18+ in Montana have received at least one dose of COVID vaccine<sup>i</sup>, making an extremely limited potential pool of donors if HB 645 were to pass. Additionally, because the FDA and standards and accreditations for blood banks do not require information about donor vaccination status, out of state blood would not be available to replace the shortage that will occur in Montana as a result of this bill.

Montana has always worked hard to ensure access to the 63% of the state population that lives in the small towns, farms, and ranches of Montana<sup>ii</sup>. Despite a national trend of hospital closures and in a state with only one “urban” county and 45 “frontier” counties, Montana has worked to keep its rural hospitals open and caring for patients. The dedication of this legislative body to care for all Montanans has been an essential component to continued access to care for Montana’s patients.

With the passage of HR 645, patients will be unable to receive needed surgeries in their home state due to acute blood supply shortages. Cancer patients will need to travel out of state, away from their homes, families, and support systems, in order to receive the treatment they need to survive. Patients going through childbirth will have to leave Montana for their care to ensure a safe labor and delivery as transfusions are needed in the U.S. in 1 out of every 83 deliveries.

For the above reasons, America’s Blood Centers urges the Human Services Committee to table HB 645. Please direct any follow up and/or questions to Justine Coffey, Director, Regulatory Affairs and Public Policy at [jcoffey@americasblood.org](mailto:jcoffey@americasblood.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Fry".

Kate Fry, MBA, CAE  
Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>i</sup> [https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations\\_vacc-people-onedose-pop-pop18](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations_vacc-people-onedose-pop-pop18)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/qad/FlexGrantStateRuralHealthPlan.pdf>