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America's Blood Centers Urges Congress to Diversify Blood Donor Base Ahead of Juneteenth and World Sickle Cell Awareness Day

Calls for action to support patient care amid decline in donations from diverse communities

Washington, DC – As the nation prepares to commemorate Juneteenth and World Sickle Cell Awareness Day tomorrow, America's Blood Centers (ABC), the national organization of community-based, independent blood centers that supply 60 percent of the nation's blood supply, is asking Congress to take action to diversify the blood donor base to better support patient care. Patients with conditions like Sickle Cell disease and Thalassemia often require frequent blood transfusions closely matched to their ethnic background to avoid potential complications. This reality emphasizes the importance of having a diverse blood donor base.

"Ensuring a diverse blood supply is crucial for patients with conditions like Sickle Cell disease. Unfortunately, only 12 percent of all whole blood donations in the United States come from communities of color. As we recognize Juneteenth and World Sickle Cell Awareness Day, we urge Congress to take action to diversify our blood donor base to ensure that lifesaving blood transfusions are accessible to every patient in need," said Kate Fry, CEO of America's Blood Centers.

Blood transfusion remains one of the most common hospital procedures, with patients requiring a blood transfusion every two seconds. More than 42,000 units of red blood cells, platelets, and plasma are used by patients every day. Despite the critical demand for blood transfusions, just 12 percent of whole blood donations in America come from communities of color. This reality highlights the importance of expanding donor diversity, especially since 1 in every 3 African Americans is a potential match for sickle cell patients, underlining the crucial role of minority donors in saving lives.

Data released earlier this year in the second edition of ABC's [U.S. Blood Donation Statistics and Public Messaging Guide](#) revealed a concerning 35.4 percent decline in minority donors between 2019 and 2021. There was also a 40.7 percent rise in donors aged 65 and above, further emphasizing the need for focused recruitment efforts on younger generations.

To address these challenges, ABC is calling on Congress to establish a pilot program to attract diverse and younger blood donors and to improve testing for better patient matches. Encouraging higher donation rates among younger individuals is crucial to building a more diverse blood donor base since nearly half of post-Millennials belong to minority groups. Last week, [more than 80 leading organizations nationwide](#) amplified this call in a letter asking Congress to make supporting the blood supply a national priority.

Founded in 1962, America's Blood Centers is the national organization bringing together community-based, independent blood centers. Its member organizations operate more than 600 blood collection sites providing close to 60 percent of the U.S., and a quarter of the Canadian, blood supply. These blood centers serve more than 150 million people and provide blood products and services to more than 3,500 hospitals and healthcare facilities across North America. All ABC U.S. members are licensed and regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. For more information, visit www.AmericasBlood.org.

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