



America's Blood Centers®
It's About *Life*.

1717 K Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20006

Tel: 202-393-5725 | Fax: 202-899-2621

www.AmericasBlood.org

June 4, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

America's Blood Centers (ABC) welcomes you to the role of Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ABC looks forward to working with you to ensure broad awareness of the essential role of the nation's blood supply and the shared responsibility to ensure a safe and available blood supply to meet all emergency and routine patient needs.

ABC is the national organization bringing together community-based, independent blood centers. Our member organizations operate more than 700 blood collection sites in more than 1,100 communities, 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 (FDA).

With the reorganization at HHS, we want to bring your attention to HHS' critical role in supporting the nation's blood supply, and highlight several critical functions that must be preserved to ensure patients' lives are not negatively impacted. As you are aware, blood is considered a national resource and designated an essential medicine, but is largely supported by a network of not-for-profit blood centers who successfully manage the nation's blood supply in both routine and emergency circumstances. However, there are instances when government awareness and support is necessary to ensure continuity and rapid response.

While we are committed to working with you to determine where within the new HHS structure blood policy should be located, there are several criticalities related to disaster response that must be addressed as soon as possible:

1. **A designated point person within HHS must be identified who is responsible for liaising with relevant agencies and the blood and hospital communities.** This individual should be familiar with the blood community and play a crucial role in engaging federal and state resources. Historically, the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH), who serves as HHS's blood safety manager, has served as the designated governmental representative tasked with overseeing all governmental efforts related to ensuring a safe and available blood supply, and served as the Council Chair of the Blood, Organ, and Tissue Senior Executive Council (BOTSEC), fulfilling the statutory mandate that HHS ensures coordination and collaboration among federal entities regarding the safety and availability of the blood

supply¹. While the ASH has historically filled this role, we recognize it may be a different individual moving forward. Regardless, we urge you to quickly identify this essential point of contact. ABC stands ready to support the identified point person by providing essential orientation and information.

2. The blood community is able to handle most disasters with limited to no action from the federal government through a task force established by the blood community, the AABB Interorganizational Disaster Task Force. Yet, there are some disasters where federal government support may be required, including messaging about blood donation or providing logistical support to get blood supplies into a certain areas. Since the inception of the AABB Interorganizational Disaster Task Force, HHS has consistently had a representative participating in these efforts, providing support as needed, and ensuring the government is aware of the state of the blood supply during disasters. **We urge you to ensure a government representative that communicates with BOTSEC is included in the Interorganizational Disaster Task Force moving forward.**
3. Finally, although the 2023 National Blood Collection and Utilization Survey (NBCUS) has been completed, it has not yet been released in its entirety. The data collected through the NBCUS serves as an important tracking and trending tool that helps to shape national policies and strategic planning to ensure the U.S. maintains a safe and robust blood supply. The survey is the only tracking tool available for blood and blood products collected and transfused in the U.S. **We urge you to ensure the full set of data already collected is released.**

We thank you for your attention to these critical items and stand ready to work with you to ensure the blood supply is a national priority within the new HHS structure, which we believe presents an opportunity to prioritize blood donation in a more streamlined and impactful manner. ABC is prepared to assist in providing expertise to aid HHS in your work of supporting a safe and available blood supply.

Please direct any follow up and/or questions to Diane Calmus, Vice President, Government Affairs, at dcalmus@americasblood.org.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely yours,



Kate Fry, MBA, CAE Chief
Executive Officer

¹ “The Secretary of Health and Human Services, or the Secretary's designee, shall--(1) ensure coordination and collaboration between relevant Federal departments and agencies related to the safety and availability of the blood supply, including--(A) the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the Health Resources and Services Administration; (B) the Department of Defense; and (C) the Department of Veterans Affairs; and (2)...consult and communicate with private stakeholders, including blood collection establishments, health care providers, accreditation organizations, researchers, and patients, regarding issues related to the safety and availability of the blood supply.” [Text - H.R.2617 - 117th Congress \(2021-2022\): Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#).