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America's Blood Centers Marks Sickle Cell Awareness Month with Urgent Call for More Diverse Blood Donors

Washington, DC – America's Blood Centers (ABC), the national organization of community-based, independent blood centers that supply 60 percent of the nation's blood, is marking Sickle Cell Awareness Month this September with a nationwide call for more diverse blood donors to meet the critical needs of patients living with sickle cell disease and other conditions requiring precisely matched blood.

Donated blood from communities of color is essential for patients whose transfusion needs go beyond basic blood type matching. For individuals with sickle cell disease—an inherited blood disorder [affecting about 100,000 people in the United States](#)—regular blood transfusions are often the difference between crisis and survival. Yet, fewer than 12 percent of all U.S. blood donations today come from communities of color, even though one in every 365 African American births is affected by sickle cell disease.

“Community blood centers are dedicated to achieving the best outcomes for every patient. Part of this is identifying precise blood types that meet the needs of specific patient populations,” said Kate Fry, CEO of America's Blood Centers. “For individuals living with sickle cell disease, a diverse and readily available blood supply is often the key to managing complications and maintaining their health. By expanding our nation's base of blood donors, we can ensure more patients receive the lifesaving care they depend on.”

Sickle Cell Awareness Month, first recognized by the federal government in 1983, is observed globally in September. This annual event aims to increase awareness about sickle cell disease and generate funding for research. Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder that results in red blood cells assuming a sickle or crescent shape. Individuals affected by this condition frequently experience chronic anemia and may require regular blood transfusions.

ABC has released [a first-of-its-kind guide](#) highlighting the growing need for donations. Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood, yet only three percent of Americans donate each year. Increasing donor diversity is vital to ensuring that patients have the right blood products when they need them most.

A single blood donation can help two or more patients in need and can be separated into red blood cells, plasma, and platelets to support multiple medical treatments. Those interested in donating can find their nearest community blood center at www.AmericasBlood.org.

Founded in 1962, America's Blood Centers (ABC) is the national organization bringing together community-based, independent blood centers across North America. These organizations operate in more than 1,100 communities and provide close to 60 percent of the U.S. and a quarter of the Canadian blood supply. ABC member organizations serve more than 150 million people and provide blood products and services to more than 3,500 hospitals and healthcare facilities. All ABC U.S. members are 501(c)(3) organizations regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or Health Canada. For more information, visit www.AmericasBlood.org.

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