

Red Cross Announces Emergency: Blood and Platelets Needed NOW!



Local American Red Cross Announces Emergency Blood Appeal: Blood and Platelet Donations Needed Now

Baltimore, MD, January 11, 2012 - In the weeks leading up to and immediately following the winter holiday season, the American Red Cross, Greater Chesapeake and Potomac Region has seen a significant decline in donor turnout at local blood drives and donor centers. This reduction in collections has put several blood types at critical or emergency levels. These low supply levels make it difficult for the region to prepare for potential emergency situations.

"We are nearing a potential crisis for patients at the more than 50 hospitals we serve, including several level one trauma centers" stated Gary J. Ouellette, CEO. "Low donor turnout around the holidays, as well as winter breaks at local high schools and colleges has lead to this drop in blood collections. As a direct result, blood inventories have continued to drop as patients' needs increase. Without your help, patients are at risk for not receiving the transfusions they need."

Like the Emergency Room of a hospital, the American Red Cross must be prepared to respond to patient emergencies with blood products 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Through the everyday support and generosity of blood and platelet donors, the Red Cross can be prepared to do this day-in and day-out, no matter when or where these blood products are needed.

Each day, approximately 44,000 units of blood are needed for patients in the United States. In fact, approximately every two seconds, someone in this country needs blood. All eligible donors are encouraged to become an Everyday supporter of the Red Cross and their communities by giving blood or platelets this winter.

A blood donor card or driver's license, or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental permission in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

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