

News Release



American
Red Cross



Media contacts:

Jocelyn Hillard, jocelyn.hillard@redcross.org, 860-384-3847

Jill McDonald Halsey, mcdonaldhalsey@chime.org, 203-294-7213

Red Cross and Connecticut Hospital Association raise awareness around severe blood shortage

Donors needed now to help prevent delays in patient care

FARMINGTON, Conn. (July 28, 2021)—The American Red Cross continues to experience a severe blood shortage as the number of trauma cases, organ transplants and elective surgeries rise—and deplete the nation’s blood inventory. In recent months, hospitals also have seen an increase in demand for blood as patients who previously deferred care during the COVID-19 pandemic present with more advanced disease progression, therefore, requiring increased blood transfusions.

The Red Cross has been distributing about 12% more blood products to hospitals across the U.S. compared to this time last year. Donors of all blood types are needed, especially type O, which stands at just a one-day supply right now. The Red Cross strives to keep a five-day supply of all blood types on hand at all times to meet the needs of patients every day and be prepared for emergencies that would require significant volumes of donated blood products.

The Connecticut Hospital Association and the Red Cross joined Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz at a news conference on Wednesday, July 28 to encourage donors of all blood types to make an appointment to give as soon as possible to prevent impacts to patient care during this severe blood shortage.

“Perhaps at no point in our history have Connecticut residents proven more definitively that we are in this life together,” observed Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz. “Through the months of the pandemic we have met challenge after challenge, supported each other, and worked together to come through the worst threat to life, livelihood and lifestyle in memory. When there’s trouble, Connecticut residents step up and I am confident that is what we will do in response to this critical shortage in the blood supply.”

“This shortage in the blood supply is noticeable in our daily patient care practice,” said Dr. Andy Agwunobi, Interim President, University of Connecticut and CEO, UConn Health. “We already follow blood conservation protocols to limit the need for donated blood, and this shortage has certainly caused us to have a heightened awareness of the guidelines of the indicators for transfusion.”

“Connecticut’s 27 acute care hospitals perform more than 450,000 surgeries and outpatient procedures per year and provide more than 240,000 cancer treatments,” commented Paul Kidwell, Senior Vice President for Policy at the Connecticut Hospital Association. “These types of procedures often require blood transfusions. We are tremendously grateful to the conscientious and generous donors for giving the gift of life.”

“The Red Cross needs to collect about 300 donations per day to support the need for blood here in Connecticut,” said Richard Branigan, Chief Operating Officer, American Red Cross Connecticut and Rhode Island Region. “The Red Cross is ready, holding multiple blood drives each day here in Connecticut, to collect the donations needed to provide for these patients in need during this severe blood shortage. With vacations, outdoor activities, school breaks and holidays, summer is already a challenging time to collect blood donations. If you are able, we ask that you make that appointment, visit a local blood drive, and do your part to help end this shortage.”

While dedicated donors across the country have rolled up a sleeve to give this summer, the need for blood and platelets remains crucial for patients relying on lifesaving transfusions.

Patients like Joey Boncoddò, a seven-year-old who was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia on November 25, 2020. Her mother, Rebecca, gave us a heartfelt reminder why your donation matters.

“We couldn’t be more grateful for those who take the time to donate lifesaving blood,” said Rebecca Boncoddò. “Many children, like my daughter Joey, rely on blood and platelets to help in their fight against cancer. People ask me every day what they can do to help and I say, ‘donate blood,’ it’s the most precious thing you can give”.

Donors who give now will help stock the shelves for the rest of the summer season. Schedule an appointment to give blood or platelets by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.

About blood donation

To donate blood, individuals need to bring a blood donor card or driver’s license or two other forms of identification that are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), 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 must meet certain height and weight requirements.

Donors can also save up to 15 minutes at the blood drive by completing a RapidPass®. With RapidPass®, donors complete the pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of donation, from a mobile device or computer. To complete a RapidPass®, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the [Red Cross Blood Donor App](#).

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation’s blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or CruzRojaAmericana.org, or follow us on Twitter at [@CTRedCross](https://twitter.com/CTRedCross).

About Connecticut Hospital Association

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) is a not-for-profit membership organization that represents hospitals and health-related organizations. With more than 90 members, CHA’s mission is to advance the health of individuals and communities by leading, representing, and

serving hospitals and healthcare providers across the continuum of care that are accountable to the community and committed to advancing health and health equity.

About UConn HealthUConn Health is Connecticut's only public academic medical center. Based on a 206-acre campus in Farmington, UConn Health has a three-part mission: research, teaching and patient care. Home to the UConn School of Medicine, School of Dental Medicine and UConn John Dempsey Hospital with nearly 5,000 employees supporting nearly 1,000 students, over 800,000 annual patient visits, and innovative scientific research contributing to the advancement of medicine. For more information, visit health.uconn.edu.

###