



Media contact: Joe Zydlo, 314-422-8613, @RedCrossBldMOIL/@RedCrossBldGOA
redcrossblood.org

Red Cross blood shortage prompts urgent call for blood and platelet donations during National Blood Donor Month

Severe weather forces blood drive cancellations causing thousands of donations to go uncollected

CITY, state (Jan. 8, 2018) — This January, National Blood Donor Month, the American Red Cross has an urgent need for blood and platelet donors of all blood types to make an appointment to give now and help address a winter blood donation shortage.

Severe winter weather has had a tremendous impact on blood donations already this year, with more than 150 blood drives forced to cancel causing over 5,500 blood and platelet donations to go uncollected. This is in addition to seasonal illnesses, such as the flu, and hectic holiday schedules collectively contributing to more than 28,000 fewer donations than what was needed in November and December.

“Even temporary disruptions to blood and platelet donations can diminish the availability for hospital patients,” said Joe Zydlo, external communications manager, Missouri-Illinois Red Cross Blood Services Region. “It’s the blood on the shelves that helps save lives in an emergency, and that’s why we’re asking eligible individuals to make an appointment to give blood or platelets today.”

While serving local hospitals is the first priority, the Red Cross can move blood products to where they’re needed most. This allows generous donors throughout the country to contribute to the national blood supply and potentially help patients locally and in storm-affected areas.

While all blood types are urgently needed, there is a more critical need for the following blood and donation types right now:

- Platelets: The clotting portion of blood primarily given to cancer patients during treatment and always in great demand.
- Type O negative: The blood type that can be transfused to almost everyone and is what doctors reach for in trauma situations.
- Type B negative: The blood type that can be transfused to type B Rh-positive and negative patients.
- Type AB: The plasma type that can be transfused to almost everyone and can be donated through a platelet or plasma donation, where available, or during a regular blood donation.

How to help

Eligible donors can find a blood or platelet donation opportunity and schedule an appointment to donate by using the free [Blood Donor App](#), visiting redcrossblood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Donation appointments and completion of a [RapidPass](#) are

encouraged to help speed up the donation process. RapidPass lets donors complete the pre-donation reading and answer the health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, by visiting redcrossblood.org/rapidpass from the convenience of a mobile device or computer, or through the Blood Donor App.

Who blood donations help

Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood – a need that is all too real for Heather Hrouda and her family. Hrouda was 25 weeks pregnant with her fourth child when she began bleeding. An emergency cesarean section was performed, but Hrouda hemorrhaged during surgery. She received 14 units of blood and seven units of plasma before she and her newborn son, Rusher, were flown to a nearby hospital. There, she received additional transfusions, and Rusher was moved to the neonatal intensive care unit, where he also received a blood transfusion to increase his red blood cell count.

“My family and I are so thankful for all the blood donors,” said Hrouda. “It is safe to say that without their time and donations, Rusher and I would not be here today. Because of donors, I get to watch my kids grow up and become the adults they dream of being.”

The Hroudas are just two examples of the many patients who depend on blood and platelet donors. Accident and burn victims, heart surgery and organ transplant patients, and patients receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer or sickle cell disease may all require blood to save their lives. The Red Cross must collect more than 13,000 blood donations every day for patients at approximately 2,600 hospitals across the country.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities Jan. 8-31

(insert dates here)

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or cruzrojaamericana.org, or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).

###