



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Department of Health Sounds Alarm Over Critical Blood Shortage *Stresses Importance, Statewide Need for Blood Donations*

Hummelstown, PA - Pennsylvania Physician General Dr. Denise Johnson and Patrick Bradley, President and CEO of the Central Pennsylvania Blood Bank, today expressed their growing concern over the dramatically decreasing number of volunteers who regularly donate blood, during a news conference highlighting the critical need for blood donation across the commonwealth.

"The critical shortage of blood across Pennsylvania and the nation is still a major concern as COVID-19 has prevented some donors from giving blood and impacted the scheduling of blood drives," Dr. Johnson said. "Blood is essential for surgeries, traumatic injuries, cancer treatment and chronic illnesses, which is why it is so important for individuals to go to their local blood bank or find a blood drive near them and donate. An adequate supply of blood is essential to ensure Pennsylvanians have safe, continuous access to the highest quality of health care. I encourage all Pennsylvanians to consider giving blood."

Blood donations are a critical and integral part of medical care. Many patients who have major surgeries will need a blood transfusion to replace blood lost during their procedure. Blood transfusions are also used for patients who have serious injuries from car crashes or natural disasters, and people with illnesses that cause anemia, like leukemia or kidney disease, will often receive blood transfusions.

Approximately 36,000 units of red blood cells are needed every day in the United States. The type of blood most commonly requested and used by hospitals is type O. Type O blood can be transfused to patients with any blood type, which is why it is often used in emergencies when there is not enough time to determine a patient's blood type.

"A significant factor contributing to blood shortages is a decrease in the amount of people entering the field of phlebotomy," Patrick Bradley, President and CEO of Central Pennsylvania Blood Bank said. "There is a high demand for these positions as it requires a unique skillset. To help with this challenge, Pennsylvania blood centers provide the necessary education and training to begin a career in phlebotomy."

There are five major blood donation centers in Pennsylvania:

- [American Red Cross Greater Pennsylvania Region](#);
- [Central Pennsylvania Blood Bank](#);
- [Community Blood Bank of Northwest PA and Western NY](#);
- [Miller-Keystone Blood Center](#); and
- [Vitalant Blood Center](#).

To donate blood, make an appointment with a local blood bank or visit an upcoming blood drive in your community. All blood types are needed to make sure there is a reliable supply for patients. Most individuals are eligible to donate blood in Pennsylvania if they are:

- In good health,
- 16 years old or older; and
- Weigh a minimum of 120 pounds.

Individuals can donate blood regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status as long as they meet donation eligibility requirements. There is no waiting period to donate blood after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine or flu vaccine. According to the [FDA guidance](#), anyone who has recovered from COVID-19 is eligible to donate blood 10 days after complete resolution of symptoms. Check with your blood center before donating as they may have different criteria.

The department created a [webpage](#) to provide more information about blood donations in Pennsylvania.

For more information on blood donation, visit the Department of Health's website at www.health.pa.gov or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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