

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 28 August 2017

Contacts: David Larsen | 206-689-6358 | DavidLa@BloodworksNW.org

Emergency blood components sent to Texas

Houston center cut off by flooding; Northwest donors urged to help

SEATTLE, WA— Today Bloodworks Northwest sent an emergency shipment of blood components to the Gulf Coast Blood Center in Houston, and to Carter Blood Center in Dallas. Units from Bloodworks were already among the first to reach flood-ravaged Houston over the weekend.

Catastrophic flooding has surrounded Houston’s Gulf Coast Blood Center – making it impossible to distribute blood or to collect blood from donors. It is expected that FEMA will deploy amphibious vehicles to move emergency blood shipments to patients and hospitals in need. Carter is designated as the distributor for blood shipments into flood-torn Houston.

“While our primary mission supports local patients, when catastrophes happen we do whatever we can to help -- even when local supplies are as tight as they’ve been in recent weeks,” said James P. AuBuchon, MD, president and CEO of Bloodworks. “It is our amazing donors who make it possible.”

The Houston-bound blood was air-shipped from SeaTac this morning, and will arrive at approximately 7:00 pm Central time this evening. (media: photo attached) Last Thursday, Bloodworks also sent a shipment of blood to McAllen, Texas to help people evacuating from coastal communities as they prepared for the approaching impact of Hurricane Harvey.

When disasters happen and emergency transfusions are required, the need is acute for most-common Type O blood and universal AB plasma. In addition, with flooding disrupting collection across a wide region, the short, five-day shelf life for platelets makes emergency shipments from outside the disaster-impacted area essential.

The AABB Interorganizational Task Force on Domestic Disasters and Acts of Terrorism also issued a nationwide appeal urging Americans donate blood this week to help come to grips with the impact of Hurricane Harvey on the nation’s blood supply. AABB is the international, not-for-profit association representing people and organizations involved transfusion medicine and cellular therapies. <http://www.aabb.org/press/Pages/pr170827.aspx>

“We’re asking local donors who have not donated recently -- regulars and first-timers -- to help us restore local inventories by donating this week,” AuBuchon said. “Having seen the images from Houston, we need to be ready to respond if additional shipments to Texas are needed in the days and weeks ahead to help people recover from the devastation caused by Harvey and its aftermath.”

Donors can schedule an appointment at schedule.bloodworksNW.org or by calling 1-800-398-7888.

About BloodworksNW

Bloodworks (formerly Puget Sound Blood Center) is backed by 70 years of Northwest history and 250,000 donors. It is local, nonprofit, independent, volunteer-supported and community-based. A recognized leader in transfusion medicine, Bloodworks serves patients in more than 90 hospitals in Washington, Oregon and Alaska — partnering closely with local hospitals to deliver the highest level of patient care. Comprehensive services include blood components, complex cross-matching, specialized lab services for organ transplants, care for patients with blood disorders, and collection of cord blood stem cells for cancer treatment. Bloodworks Research Institute performs leading-edge research in blood biology, transfusion medicine, blood storage and treatment of blood disorders. Patients with traumatic injuries, undergoing surgeries or organ transplantation, or receiving treatment for cancer and blood disorders all depend on our services, expertise, laboratories and research. For more information, visit bloodworksnw.org