

**For Immediate Release**



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**Contact:** John Yeager | 425-765-9845 | [JYeager@BloodworksNW.org](mailto:JYeager@BloodworksNW.org)

Karen Kirby | 206-689-6359 | [karenk@bloodworksnw.org](mailto:karenk@bloodworksnw.org)

## **Hospitals to resume elective surgeries, triggering surge in blood needs**

*Donors needed now for critical patient care, community recovery*

**Seattle, WA** – With new COVID-19 cases in the Northwest projected to decline in the weeks ahead, Washington and Oregon hospitals are preparing to re-start surgeries, organ transplants and cancer treatments that were suspended in March after the magnitude of the pandemic threat became apparent. Patient needs and requests for blood from Bloodworks' healthcare partners are rising quickly, and could reach pre-COVID levels as early as next week before the blood supply is ready.

"When the coronavirus hit, donors in the community stepped up immediately," said Curt Bailey, President and CEO of Bloodworks Northwest. "As we start the challenging road to recovery, patients need them even more."

Hospitals and healthcare providers in the region are preparing to tackle a significant backlog of surgeries, medical treatments and procedures that require transfusions "Mounting requests from hospitals are outpacing current collection levels. We cannot afford to re-start these and other treatments without being utterly certain the blood will be there and steadily available over the coming days and months, and only the community can close the gap," Bailey said.

Essential measures to contain the coronavirus -- stay-at-home orders, online learning at colleges and schools, workplace and business closures, social distancing to discourage public and faith-based gatherings – also took away usual settings for mobile blood drives that account for up to 60% of collections (the equivalent of 34,000 units since March 1). "The sacrifices necessary for a safe and healthy community have been felt and shared by everyone," Bailey noted. "After conserving the blood supply in recent weeks, we must rebuild inventory to a higher, resilient level that propels the community toward a safe, sustainable recovery."

"Bloodworks has implemented some creative new approaches to blood collection," said Vicki Finson, Executive Vice President of Blood Services. "With donor support we can make the most of them to restore the blood supply for people who've been patiently awaiting their turn. We're determined to be ready for patients and to support our healthcare partners, however right now the need is outpacing the supply. Only by boosting current collections and calling on donors to book appointments can we meet the critical need hospitals have identified for the weeks ahead."

In extraordinary times like these (and in normal times, too) the community blood supply supports patients receiving trauma care, undergoing surgeries, cancer treatment, organ transplants, plus new moms and neonatal care.

Bloodworks is urging all donors to step up for community recovery. Please pre-book your next several donations [now](#) to make sure patients get the fighting chance and lifesaving blood they deserve. All types are urgently needed, but Type O is especially in demand.

The blood components in greatest demand are perishable, just like milk. Platelets have a shelf-life of only 5 days; red cells can be stored for up to 42 days. That's why donors are needed every day. The community will have a safe and reliable blood supply when donating blood becomes a kindhearted habit—when donors commit to donating two or three times per year or more.

We welcome regular and new donors as humble heroes to save lives and to help in COVID recovery.

“Now more than ever the act of donating blood is a way for people to look after their families, friends, coworkers and neighbors,” Bailey said. “When it comes to a safe and resilient blood supply, let’s be the community that leads the nation.”

#### **Additional background**

Before COVID-19, about 60% of the blood supply was collected through mobile drives hosted by drive sponsors who organized drives at schools, workplaces, offices, factories, community spaces and places of worship. Due to social distancing, Bloodworks is no longer doing one-time only mobile drives. Instead, “pop-up donor centers” are multi-week drives in spacious, temporary venues like T-Mobile Park, Cheney Stadium, Angel of the Winds Arena – along with many other area businesses and churches which are providing the opportunity for hundreds of donor appointments per day. Extended hours at donor centers also play a key role.

Whole blood donors can give blood once every 56 days, up to 6 times a year. Those aged 16 & 17 who meet donation weight and eligibility requirements may donate with a signed [Bloodworks permission form](#).

**Appointments are required to donate blood, and no guests or people under the age of 16 are permitted onsite to support safe social distancing, minimize wait time, and ensure the best donation experience possible. Same day appointments are often available by calling ahead to 800-398-7888. Special appointments have been reserved for donors who are blood type O negative in this crucial time, so please contact us at 800-398-7888 or email [schedule@bloodworksnw.org](mailto:schedule@bloodworksnw.org) if this is your blood type.**

Donating blood is safe, and there is no risk of contracting coronavirus from the donation process. (Source: [AABB](#)) Bloodworks policies comply with FDA, CDC, local health departments and other recommendations related to COVID-19. Bloodworks follows CDC guidance on wearing masks by wearing cloth face masks donated by volunteers or a face shield. We encourage donors to wear masks to their donation appointments and whenever they are in public. Bloodworks routinely sanitizes donation areas, chairs, surfaces and common objects such as door knobs and light switches, and use hand sanitizer. Staff, donors, and volunteers are advised to stay home if they feel unwell. Bloodworks has posted information addressing questions and concerns for blood donors at [bloodworksnw.org/coronavirus](http://bloodworksnw.org/coronavirus). Blood donation takes about an hour from registration to post-donation refreshment. Information about [who can donate](#) and where, is available at [www.bloodworksnw.org](http://www.bloodworksnw.org).

**Additional Resources:**

For the latest information on COVID-19 please visit the [CDC website](#) and Washington State Department of Health [COVID-19 main page](#).

**Bloodworks Donor Centers:**

Appointments and information at [BloodworksNW.org](http://BloodworksNW.org) or 800-398-7888..

- [Bellevue Center](#)  
1807 132nd Avenue NE  
Bellevue, WA 98005
- [Bellingham Center](#)  
410 W Bakerview Rd., Suite 117  
Bellingham, WA 98226
- [Central Seattle](#)  
921 Terry Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104
- [Everett Center](#)  
2703 Oakes Avenue  
Everett, WA 98201
- [Federal Way Center](#)  
1414 S 324TH Street, B101  
Federal Way, WA 98003
- [Lynnwood Center](#)  
19723 Highway 99, Suite F  
Lynnwood, WA 98036
- [Olympia Center](#)  
1220 Eastside Street SE  
Olympia, WA 98501
- [North Seattle Center](#)  
10357 Stone Avenue N  
Seattle, WA 98133
- [Silverdale Center](#)  
3230 NW Randall Way  
Silverdale, WA 98383
- [Tukwila Center](#)  
130 Andover Park E  
Tukwila, WA 98188
- [Vancouver, WA Donor Center](#)  
9320 NE Vancouver Mall Blvd, Suite100  
Vancouver, WA 98662
- [Lane Center](#)  
2211 Willamette St  
Eugene, OR 97405

**About Bloodworks Northwest** – Bloodworks Northwest is backed by 75 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 at 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. Blood donation appointments can be scheduled at [bloodworksnw.org](http://bloodworksnw.org).