

For Immediate Release



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Local Blood Supply Faces “Perfect Storm”

Bloodworks Northwest Confronts Confusion Over Donation Eligibility, Warm Spring Weather and Record Blood Usage

Highest Seven-Day Usage in Bloodworks’ History - Less Than 24-Hour Supply of Blood on Hand for Hospitals in Washington & Oregon

Emergency Appeal For Donors To Combat Shortage

(April 15, 2021 – Seattle, WA) With confusion over post COVID-19 vaccination donation eligibility lingering, combined with a string of unseasonably warm spring weather (when donors tend to skip more appointments), record high blood usage at hospitals across the Pacific Northwest, and a national blood shortage, our community blood supply is facing a “perfect storm,” an unforeseen combination of events that’s having a significant impact on the local blood supply. In fact, Bloodworks officials are calling it the biggest blood shortage since the pandemic began a year ago.

With transfusions at 118%, indicating continuing high patient need (as more surgeries are now being scheduled) and blood supplies hovering at a 24-hour supply, Bloodworks Northwest is making an urgent call for blood donors to book appointments now. Adding to this pressure is lingering concern that some donors may still be confused about whether they can donate blood after receiving their COVID-19 vaccination, leading them to delay donations unnecessarily. The number of donors showing up for scheduled appointments has been steadily dropping since February. In that month, the show rate was 80%, in March, it dropped to 77% and so far in April, it’s at 73%. Assistance from blood centers across the country is limited or uncertain as a national shortage has impacted the ability of other blood centers to respond. With so few units of blood on the shelves, our community is one major accident away from crisis.

Bloodworks Northwest President & CEO Curt Bailey says, “This is an alarming situation and the community must act immediately by making appointments to donate blood and keeping those appointments to ensure the supply is available to meet this unprecedented need. It’s unheard of that a confluence of events like what our community is facing happens, but as a frequent donor or a new donor you’re directly helping people facing cancer, trauma, and surgeries weather this storm.”

For the care and safety of our community, Bloodworks Northwest is reminding the public that donating blood is a critical activity and there is no reason to delay donating after receiving a

COVID-19 vaccine. Bloodworks officials are also concerned about the number of appointment cancellations due to this confusion. Bloodworks says from the beginning of the month, more than 1,600 donors canceled or had to reschedule their appointment. Bloodworks Northwest urges community members of all blood types to rush to book appointments at [Donor Centers](#) and [Pop-Up Blood Drives](#) in April by visiting bloodworksnw.org.

Stats:

- Patient usage is a record high 18% above normal, resulting in 500 additional units distributed in the past 7 days. Types O positive and A positive are especially in demand.
- Our community's blood supply is currently 1,700 units below operational levels; meaning only an emergency 24 hour supply of all blood types is available to hospitals.
- Type O is short 900 units, and Type A positive is short 600 units leaving empty shelves.
- It normally takes 1,000 donors every day to maintain an operational blood supply in Western Washington and Oregon allowing our community to respond to routine needs for blood and emergencies.

About Donating Blood:

- **There is no deferral waiting period to donate if you receive the Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson/Janssen, Novovax or AstraZeneca COVID vaccine.**
- Donating blood is a safe and essential action during the pandemic. Appointments and masks are required. In accordance with current social distancing guidelines, no walk-ins, guests, or people under age 16 are permitted onsite. Bloodworks has posted information addressing questions and concerns for blood donors at bloodworksnw.org/coronavirus.
- Most people in good health, at least 18 years old, and who weigh at least 110 pounds can donate whole blood every 56 days. Check out [our detailed eligibility Q&A](#) or call us at 800-398-7888.
- Donations with Bloodworks provide 95% of the lifesaving blood supply to Pacific Northwest hospitals. It takes about an hour to give blood from check-in to post-donation cookie. Information about [who can donate](#) and where, is available at www.bloodworksnw.org.

Additional Resources:

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

Bloodworks Donor Centers and Pop-Up Centers:

Appointments and information at BloodworksNW.org or 800-398-7888. See our list of [Donor Centers](#) and [Pop-Up locations](#).

- Bellevue Center
1807 132nd Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA 98005
425-453-4200
- Bellingham Center
410 W Bakerview Rd., Suite 117
Bellingham, WA 98226
360-671-8848
- Central Seattle
921 Terry Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104
206-292-6500
- Everett Center
2703 Oakes Avenue
Everett, WA 98201
425-740-2909
- Federal Way Center
1414 S 324TH Street, B101
Federal Way, WA 98003
253-945-8660
- Lynnwood Center
19723 Highway 99, Suite F
Lynnwood, WA 98036
425-412-1000
- Olympia Center
1220 Eastside Street SE
Olympia, WA 98501
360-596-3950
- North Seattle Center
10357 Stone Avenue N.
Seattle, WA 98133
206-526-1970
- Silverdale Center
3230 NW Randall Way
Silverdale, WA 98383
360-308-7340
- Tukwila Center
130 Andover Park E
Tukwila, WA 98188
206-241-6300
- Vancouver, WA Donor Center
9320 NE Vancouver Mall Blvd., Suite100
Vancouver, WA 98662
360-567-4800
- Eugene, OR Center
2211 Willamette St
Eugene, OR 97405
541-484-9111

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.

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