

For Immediate Release



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Local Blood Supply Faces Another “Perfect Storm”
Bloodworks Northwest Faces Staffing Shortages, Continued COVID-19 Social Distancing
Constraints, and Alarming Rise in Cancellations
Impact on Platelet Supplies Concerning for Those Needing Cancer Treatments
Bloodworks Northwest Issues Emergency Appeal to Fill 2,000 Open Appointments

(October 6, 2021 – Seattle, WA) For the second time since April, Bloodworks Northwest is facing a “perfect storm” that’s hitting the local blood and platelet supply hard. Bloodworks is experiencing staff shortages of phlebotomists (blood collection specialists), continued constraints in collecting brought on by COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, and an alarming appointment cancellation rate that has continued to rise since spring. As a result, the local blood supply remains short. The local platelet supply is now at critical levels, directly impacting those needing cancer treatment.

Like healthcare organizations [across the nation](#), nonprofit Bloodworks Northwest faces a worker shortage and is actively hiring 50 blood collection employees across the Pacific Northwest.

“Bloodworks is raising staffing levels of our Blood Collection Specialists to ensure the ability to collect the blood our community needs to care for patients,” said Bloodworks Executive Vice President of Blood Services Vicki Finson. “Blood Collection Specialists are incredible healthcare professionals who ensure our donors have great experiences and save lives.” Currently, with significant staff openings, fewer donor appointments are available both at centers and pop ups. Additionally, COVID-19 social distancing guidelines continue to impact the number of mobile blood drives, resulting in fewer available appointments and drives. Adding pressure, over 1,000 donors cancelled appointments this week. So, Bloodworks Northwest is making an urgent call for blood donors to book and, just as importantly, keep appointments now.

“This ongoing blood shortage is an alarming situation, and critically ill and injured patients need our generous donors to help answer the call now,” said Bloodworks Northwest President and CEO Curt Bailey. “While a four or five-day supply is ideal for patients, our community has less than a 24-hour supply in stock of Type O positive – the most commonly transfused blood type. It’s critical to public health that our community take care of one another by donating blood.”

Bloodworks Northwest urges community members of all blood types to rush to book appointments at [Donor Centers](#) and [Pop-Up Blood Drives](#) at bloodworksnw.org or 800-398-7888. Bloodworks is expanding hours at several of its donor centers, adding 100 additional appointment openings per week starting in November. Those appointments are available for advance booking now at BloodworksNW.org

Some Facts:

- Over 6,000 open appointments in October with 2,000 of them open in the next 10 days.
- Over 1000 appointments for this week were canceled and we've had difficulty in finding donors to replace them last minute. That is the equivalent of 20% of our weekly appointments being canceled.
- We have less than a 24 hour supply of Type O; 900 units below operational levels.
- Our community has been running at less than a 24 hour supply of O Positive for 29 straight days with usage restrictions in place to conserve the supply.

Blood donations is a safe and essential action during the pandemic. Appointments and masks are required. 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.

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](#).

Careers At Bloodworks: <https://www.bloodworksnw.org/careers>

About Bloodworks Northwest – Bloodworks Northwest is backed by 77 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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