



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 18, 2016

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BLOOD CENTERS OF THE PACIFIC ISSUES URGENT CRITICAL PUBLIC APPEAL FOR DONORS OF ALL TYPES DUE TO EXTREME BLOOD SHORTAGE

*Blood inventory down to precarious two-day supply
due to increased local hospital use and lack of summer donations*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – This July, reserves of whole blood throughout Blood Centers of the Pacific service area ranging from San Francisco through Northern Nevada, and the Oregon border south to Merced, have been trending at almost 3,000 pints below ideal inventory levels – the equivalent of almost 9,000 lives that could be saved – forcing Blood Centers of the Pacific to issue a critical public appeal urgently encouraging blood donors of all types to schedule a blood donation as soon as possible.

Currently, the fluctuating blood inventory level has been trending at an approximate two-day supply for patients, which is half of the ideal quantity needed to provide a safe and available blood inventory. This is not only a San Francisco Bay Area shortage. Other west coast blood banks went out on appeal July 5th, and an unprecedented joint national appeal was issued on July 11th by AABB, America's Blood Centers, and ARC.

“It is critical that we are prepared to respond to blood needs because it is a matter of life and death. This unprecedented shortage of blood has great potential to compromise our ability to support the transfusions that physicians need to care for, or even save the lives of, their patients,” said Dr. Suchitra Pandey, Chief Medical Officer/Medical Director at Blood Centers of the Pacific. “Additionally, many transfusion-dependent patients have been requiring unusually large quantities of blood components the last few months.”

Hospital demand for blood has increased significantly this year. Compared to July 2015, approximately 500 more pints of red blood cells are projected to be in demand from hospitals this July. This increase in blood usage among patients, combined with the plummeting levels of blood donations since the Memorial Day holiday has created an extra strain on an already lean blood supply.

Each week, Blood Centers of the Pacific and its partner blood centers need at least 8,000 donors to meet the needs of patients in our community and beyond. Less than 40% of the general population is eligible to donate blood and less than 10% of those eligible actually donate. Blood Centers of the Pacific and its partner blood centers provide blood to more than 100 hospitals throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, Northern and Central California, Northern Nevada and around the world as needed.

Out-of-state resources to meet local patient blood needs have also been exhausted since blood centers across the country are also suffering from the widespread decline in donations. Summer is typically a challenging time to collect blood due to many reasons including: high school and colleges, where many blood drives are hosted, are on summer break, regular blood donors are on vacation, and others are deferred when they return from travelling. This summer has been especially impacted by the effects of the Zika virus on several regions throughout the world.

To schedule a donation appointment, please visit bloodheroes.com or call 1-888-393-GIVE (4483).

About Blood Centers of the Pacific

Blood Centers of the Pacific is a nonprofit, community-based organization that provides blood components to hospitals, physicians and patients throughout Northern California. Blood Centers of the Pacific also houses the Blood Systems Research Institute which conducts medical research to improve blood safety and patient care. Blood Centers of the Pacific and its partner blood centers help 100,000 patients every year with blood donated by community volunteers.

About Blood Donation

Volunteer blood donors must be at least 16, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and be in good health. Additional height/weight requirements apply to donors 22 and younger, and donors who are 16 must have a signed permission from a parent or guardian. For more information, visit www.bloodcenters.org.

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