



**American
Red Cross**

We need your help more than ever.

As the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues to impact our communities, we need your help ensuring we have a sufficient blood supply to support hospital patients in our state and across the country. The American Red Cross is working to continue delivering our mission, including the collection of lifesaving blood, but we have had a staggering number of scheduled Red Cross blood drives cancelled as more workplaces, college campuses and other venues send people home and encourage social distancing. Disruptions to blood donations can lead to shortages and cause delays in essential medical care. Thousands of blood drives have been cancelled nationwide already. These donations are vital for our hospitals to continue having surgeries, providing lifesaving blood to cancer patients and many others.

As concerns about the coronavirus pandemic rise, **we need your help to communicate four vital messages to the public:**

- **Donating blood is a safe process** and people should not be concerned about giving or receiving blood during this challenging time.
- **More healthy donors are needed** to give now to prevent a blood shortage.
- **Keep scheduled blood drives**, which will allow donors the opportunity to give blood.
- **We need more locations** to host blood drives.

As an emergency preparedness organization, the Red Cross has also taken additional steps to ensure the safety of staff and donors at each Red Cross blood drive.

- The Red Cross only collects blood from individuals who are healthy and feeling well at the time of donation – and who meet other eligibility requirements, available at RedCrossBlood.org.
- We are now pre-screening all individuals by checking their temperature before they enter any Red Cross blood drive or donation center, including our own staff and volunteers.
- At each blood drive and donation center, Red Cross employees follow thorough safety protocols including wearing gloves, routinely wiping down donor-touched areas, using sterile collection sets for every donation, and preparing the arm for donation with an aseptic scrub.
- Additional spacing has been implemented within each blood drive set up to incorporate social distancing measures between donation beds and stations within the blood drive.
- The average blood drives are only 20-30 people and are not large gatherings.

These mitigation measures will help to keep blood recipients, staff and donors safe.

In addition, our **blood collection centers in Farmington and Norwich will be open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 1 pm until further notice for new appointments.** Should you

have any ideas for additional locations to support us daily, please let me know.

The Red Cross is also working to ensure we can continue to carry out other aspects of our lifesaving mission, including providing critical disaster relief services. We are working with public health officials to ensure the safety of local communities and our workforce, while still providing the help and hope they need should disaster strike.

We're asking the American people to give blood during this challenging time, and we are asking you as our supporter to help communicate this critical need. Those who are healthy, feeling well and eligible to give blood or platelets, are urged to **make an appointment to donate as soon as possible** by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Please let me know if you have questions about this critical need. Thank you for your leadership during this time and for your help in sharing this message.

Thank you for your support during these trying times.

Mario Bruno, CEO
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Connecticut and Rhode Island