

URGENT MEMO



**American
Red Cross**

March 26, 2020

Community Leaders:

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 New York 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. As of 3/20/2020, about 177 blood drives, representing approximately 5,000 fewer blood donations, have been canceled in the U.S. due to COVID-19 concerns.

Today, I have two critical requests:

- 1. We need your help to encourage your community to donate lifesaving blood by making public statements about the importance of donating blood and the essential service of blood collection. Promote the need by making public statements and posting on your social media platforms (sample messaging is attached).**
- 2. We need your help encouraging companies and organizations to continue to hold existing blood drives or schedule new ones.**

To help overcome some of the concerns about collecting blood, 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](https://www.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 25 people spread over a several hour period and are not large gatherings.

This information is outlined in [What to Know About Coronavirus Disease 2019 and Blood Donation Safety](#) at [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org).

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](https://www.redcrossblood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Attached are social messages that you can post on your social media channels. To schedule a new blood drive contact Amber Young at (585) 250-2709 or at email Amber.Young2@redcross.org

Please do not hesitate to contact me about this critical need or other ways the Red Cross can be of assistance. Thank you for your leadership during this time and for your help in sharing this critical message.

Sincerely,

Amber L. Young

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