



## Struggling Economy takes its Toll on Summer Blood Drives

*Red Cross reports a drop in blood drives this summer; invites new organizations to host blood drives*

**MADISON, Wis.** (July 13, 2009) – With the unemployment rate at a 25-year high and businesses continually evaluating productivity in an effort to weather the economic storm, the local Red Cross Blood Services Region is reporting a drop in scheduled blood drives and subsequent donations this summer.

### **Fewer Scheduled Community Blood Drives**

From June through August 2009, the Red Cross reports that approximately 33 blood drives have been cancelled by companies citing economic factors. Another 52 drives have reduced their donation goals for the same reason. The net effect is approximately 1,725 fewer scheduled donations during the summer months, which are already challenging with many donors vacationing or busy with summer activities. As much as 80 percent of blood donations made through the American Red Cross are at blood drives at supporting organizations.

“Community organizations and businesses are tremendous supporters of the hospitals and patients served by the American Red Cross,” said Greg Novinska, CEO of the Badger-Hawkeye Blood Services Region of the American Red Cross. “We understand the need of some long-time supporters to reprioritize blood drives to ensure their own viability. However, the need for blood is constant.”

To continue meeting patient needs in the community and nationwide, the American Red Cross invites stable organizations and businesses to consider hosting one or more blood drives beginning this summer. New blood drive hosts and sponsor organizations will have a unique chance to make a vital contribution to healthcare in their communities.

### **How to Host a Blood Drive**

Organizations interested in learning more about hosting a blood drive are encouraged to contact the American Red Cross at 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (448-3543) and press option 4 or online at [givebloodgivelife.org](http://givebloodgivelife.org). Hosting a blood drive is a meaningful way to support healthcare in our communities and a great way to build relations within an organization.

### **Fewer Summer Blood Donations**

When blood drives are cancelled, donors don't always reschedule for another blood drive. Even if one drive is cancelled, there are many other opportunities to give. The Red Cross encourages all eligible donors to give blood this summer. All blood types are needed – especially type O negative, B negative and A negative.

### **How to Donate Blood**

Simply call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (1-800-448-3543) or visit [givebloodgivelife.org](http://givebloodgivelife.org) to make an appointment or for more information. A blood donor card or driver's license, or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Eligible donors must be at least 17 years old, or 16 years old with a signed Red Cross parental/guardian consent form where state permits, must weigh at least 110 pounds and be in general good health.

**The need is constant. The gratification is instant. Give blood.™**

### **About the American Red Cross**

Governed by volunteers and supported by giving individuals and communities, the American Red Cross is the single largest supplier of blood products to hospitals throughout the United States. While local hospital needs are always met first, the Red Cross also helps ensure no patient goes without blood no matter where or when they need it. In addition to providing nearly half of the nation's blood supply, the Red Cross provides relief to victims of disaster, trains millions in lifesaving skills, serves as a communication link between U.S. military members and their families, and assists victims of international disasters or conflicts.

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