



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center

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## Labor Day Weekend Adds to Challenge for Region’s Blood Supply

Donations needed before and after holiday weekend to make up for decrease in donations

(Sept. 1, 2020 | Ottumwa, Iowa) – Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center expects to see approximately 25% fewer donors than normal over the upcoming Labor Day Weekend. Additional donors are needed to ensure the Blood Center’s ability to provide an adequate supply through the holiday weekend. MVRBC asks eligible donors to schedule online at [www.bloodcenter.org](http://www.bloodcenter.org), by calling (800) 747-5401, or via the Blood Center’s mobile app ([www.bloodcenter.org/app](http://www.bloodcenter.org/app)). All presenting donors will receive a voucher for a \$10 gift card and double or triple points in the Blood Center’s online Donor Loyalty Store (3X points Sept. 7-13).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our region’s blood supply. This is due mainly to blood drive cancellations at schools, places of worship, offices, and manufacturing sites. “It has been a challenging summer for the blood supply, to say the least,” said Amanda Hess, Director, Donor and Public Relations. “The COVID-19 pandemic has made blood drive cancellations a regular occurrence, and we’re now facing a holiday weekend that could push the donation rate even lower. But the use of blood at our local hospitals is constant, so we are asking donors to make appointments as soon as possible. We are also asking groups willing to sponsor blood drives at our Donor Centers or in the community to step forward now and through the fall.”



As an added ‘Thank You’ for donating, all presenting donors will receive a voucher for a \$10 gift card and double or triple points to spend in the Blood Center’s donor loyalty store (3X points Sept. 7-13). The voucher for the \$10 gift card, available

through Sept. 13, is redeemable online or by phone for the donor’s choice of Amazon.com, Target, Subway, Burger King, iTunes/App Store, Applebee’s, Olive Garden, or Domino’s. Under the donor loyalty program, donors earn points with each donation that can be redeemed in the Blood Center’s online loyalty store for exclusive donor gifts such as apparel, drinkware, and phone accessories.

Under ideal conditions, MVRBC would collect more than 3500 units of whole blood every week to ensure its ability to provide a sufficient blood supply for our region. With recent cancellations of mobile blood drives, collections are projected at less than 3000 donations per week through the month of September.

Blood donation is considered an essential service for health care and has continued throughout the COVID19 pandemic. The Blood Center has taken steps to ensure blood drives will remain an acceptable activity under federal, state, and local public health guidelines. Masks or facial coverings are required for all staff and donors at Donor Centers and blood drives, and all donors are required to make an appointment for donation. By eliminating walk-in donations during the pandemic, the Blood Center can exert greater control over donor flow and social distancing.

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## MISSISSIPPI VALLEY REGIONAL BLOOD CENTER

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**To maintain a safe, hygienic environment at Donor Centers and blood drives:**

- All staff and donors are now required to wear a face covering while inside Donor Centers or participating in a mobile blood drive. Paper masks will be provided for those who arrive without their own mask or facial covering.
- Donors are now required to make appointments for donation. To maintain social distancing and appropriate donor flow, walk-ins will only be accepted when an appointment slot is available.
- Please do not give blood if you are experiencing any symptoms of a COVID-19 infection or have in the last 14 days been within six feet of someone who has the virus or is being tested for the virus for greater than 15 minutes without use of personal protective equipment.
- Prior to donation, donors are screened for symptoms of illness (body temperature, heart rate, blood pressure, and hemoglobin level all are checked, and the donor completes a pre-donation Donor History Questionnaire).
- When possible, donors are asked to complete the Donor History Questionnaire online on the same day as their donation (see [www.bloodcenter.org/EarlyQ](http://www.bloodcenter.org/EarlyQ))
- Staff have added space between chairs in screening areas and in the post-donation refreshment area. Between donations, staff wipe down chairs and surfaces to maintain a safe, hygienic environment.



**About Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center**

Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center (MVRBC) is the exclusive provider of blood products and services to 115 hospitals in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin, including Jefferson County Health Center, Knoxville Hospital and Clinics, Lucas County Health Center, Mahaska Health Partnership, Monroe County Hospital, Ottumwa Regional Health Center, and is the primary supplemental provider to University of Iowa's DeGowin Blood Center. The Blood Center's [service region](#) extends from southwestern Wisconsin to St. Louis, Missouri and from Danville, Illinois to Chariton, Iowa. For more information, see [www.bloodcenter.org](http://www.bloodcenter.org) and visit the Blood Center's social media channels: [www.facebook.com/MVRBC](https://www.facebook.com/MVRBC), [www.twitter.com/willyougive](https://www.twitter.com/willyougive), [www.youtube.com/MVRBC](https://www.youtube.com/MVRBC), and [www.instagram.com/willyougive/](https://www.instagram.com/willyougive/).

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