

**CHANGE
THE WORLD**
ONE PINT AT A TIME

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center

CONTACT

Kirby Winn

Manager, Public Relations

kwinn@mvrbc.org | (563) 349-1571

World Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Day is June 19, 2019;

Blood transfusions play a key role in treatment of patients with Sickle Cell Disease

(June 12, 2019 | Cedar Rapids, Iowa) –Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center (MVRBC) will join other blood centers, patients, and advocates in recognizing June 19, 2019 as World Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Day. The international awareness day is observed annually with the goal to increase public knowledge and understanding of sickle cell disease, and the challenges experienced by patients and their families and caregivers.

On June 19, the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America will collaborate with other agencies to carry out a 24-hour social media campaign to “Shine the Light on Sickle Cell.” Those interested in organizing or attending a “Shine the Light on Sickle Cell” event are asked to email ShineTheLightOnSickleCell@gmail.com and to follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ShineTheLightOnSickleCell.

In the United States, Sickle Cell Disease primarily affects African-American and Latino populations. Patients with Sickle Cell Disease rely on regular blood transfusions as part of their treatment. Transfusions of red blood cells can replace “sickled” cells with healthy red blood cells, thereby relieving pain and complications that come with Sickle Cell Disease. Suitable blood components for Sickle Cell Disease patients most often come from African-American and Latino donors. As a result, the Blood Center continually looks to increase the rate of blood donation within these populations.

“Sickle Cell patients often require many transfusions over long periods of treatment,” said Dr. Yasuko Erickson, Chief Medical Officer. “Quality and longevity of life are at stake. Increasing the diversity of our donor base means we can ensure the availability of well-matched blood components for sickle cell patients when they need it.”

Blood donor Ashley Morgan says she is motivated to give blood on a regular basis because blood transfusions were so important to her late cousin’s treatment for Sickle Cell Disease. “Christopher passed away a few years ago, but I continue to give blood because I know how important it is for my blood type to help people with sickle cell.”

For more information on World Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Day and to access campaign materials for World Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Day, see www.bloodcenter.org/sickle.



This summer: \$10 gift cards for all presenting donors; \$500 Visa gift card drawing during critical weeks

During the challenging months of summer, all presenting donors will receive a voucher for a \$10 gift card for the donor’s choice of Amazon, Casey’s General Stores, Dairy Queen, or Domino’s. And, during the most critical weeks of the year, donors will be automatically entered in one-week pop-up drawings for a \$500 Visa gift card (see dates, below).

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MISSISSIPPI VALLEY REGIONAL BLOOD CENTER

CENTRAL ILLINOIS COMMUNITY BLOOD CENTER • COMMUNITY BLOOD SERVICES OF ILLINOIS

\$500 Visa Gift Card Drawings:

June 17 - 23
June 24 - 30
July 1 – 7

July 22 - 28
July 29 - Aug. 4
Aug. 26 - Sept. 1

Sept. 2 – 8
Sept. 9 - 15

MVRBC is the provider to UnityPoint St. Luke’s Hospital, Mercy Cedar Rapids, Mercy Iowa City, and is the primary supplemental provider to University of Iowa’s DeGowin Blood Center. The Blood Center operates Donor Centers in Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, and Muscatine, and holds mobile blood drives across the region.

Donors may schedule an appointment to give blood at an MVRBC Donor Center or mobile blood drive by calling (800) 747-5401, scheduling online at www.bloodcenterimpact.org, or via the IMPACT mobile app (www.bloodcenter.org/app).

About Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center

Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center (MVRBC) is the exclusive provider of blood products and services to 95 hospitals in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin, including UnityPoint St. Luke’s Hospital, Mercy Cedar Rapids, Mercy Iowa City, and is the primary supplemental provider to University of Iowa’s DeGowin Blood Center. The Blood Center is based in Davenport, Iowa, where MVRBC’s testing, processing and primary distribution center produces transfusable blood component products from more than 200,000 whole blood and platelet apheresis donations each year. The Blood Center’s service region extends from southwestern Wisconsin to St. Louis, Missouri and from Danville, Illinois to Albia, Iowa, an area with a population of more than four million residents. For more information, go to www.bloodcenter.org.

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