A Campaign for a More Resilient Blood Supply

Approximately every two seconds, someone in America needs blood.

On average, 21,000 times a day a patient receives lifesaving blood donated by American Red Cross donors. They are parents, children, neighbors and colleagues. They are cancer patients, organ transplant recipients, accident victims and new mothers. Whoever they are and whatever the reason, their need is great and constant.

As the nation’s largest supplier of blood and blood products, the American Red Cross provides more than 40 percent of the U.S. blood supply. To meet this need, the Red Cross holds 600 blood drives across the country each day and must collect an average of 22,000 blood donations each weekday and 15,000 each weekend. Since World War II, people in America have relied upon the Red Cross to provide essential blood and blood products, whenever and wherever they are needed.

Our Community – A Growing Demand for Blood Services

The Red Cross faces serious challenges to its ability to meet the nation’s need for lifesaving blood products. As demand grows, fueled by more aggressive treatments for certain diseases and an aging and changing population, the supply needs to keep pace. Having a safe, ample and robust blood supply ready to meet our region’s needs not only saves lives, but improves community resiliency.

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There are several causes contributing to a growing gap in supply and demand that impact not only the Chicago region, but the nation as a whole:

- **Aging population.** Today, the 78 million baby boomers make up a significant portion of blood donors. As this donor base ages, they will be less able to give blood and more likely to need it.

- **Increasing diversity.** Minorities—everyone except for non-Hispanic, single-race Caucasians—will make up 54 percent of the population by 2050 according to the Census Bureau. African-Americans and other minority groups often have rare blood types, such as U-negative and Duffy-negative, that are specific to their race, ethnicity or genetic background. Minorities also have a higher number of people with type O blood, which is routinely in short supply and in high demand by hospitals, than other populations.

In the Greater Chicago area, the Red Cross faces additional challenges in addressing our region’s blood needs:

- **Inadequate infrastructure/technology.** The Chicago-based Biomedical Services operation is currently fragmented in two separate buildings. Its Blood Distribution facility is housed on the sixth floor of an aging building near downtown Chicago. The building’s location and its insufficient elevators, which are not supported by the building’s back-up generator and are frequently out of order, impede efficiency in transporting blood products throughout the Chicago region.

- **Limited Chicago-area supply.** Currently, hospitals in the Chicago area use more blood products than are collected here. The Red Cross presently supplies Chicago-area hospitals with six times more blood than is collected from Chicago area residents, and fewer than 20 percent of the 100,000 red cells and 35,000 platelet blood products distributed to Chicago-area hospitals are donated by individuals in the Chicago area.

To address these challenges and to create a more sustainable, safe and robust blood supply for the Chicago region, the Red Cross is setting out to relocate its blood distribution facility to a more modern, accessible and resilient location and enhance the capacity of the facility to include additional lifesaving services.

Additionally, the Red Cross in Chicago will work to address the dramatic demographic shifts impacting our region’s blood supply by recruiting a younger, more diverse blood donor base.

**Moving Forward – A Campaign for a More Resilient Blood Supply**

The American Red Cross in the Greater Chicago area is launching a campaign to relocate and create an accessible state-of-the-art regional Blood Center in Chicago. The Greater Chicago Blood Center will be integrated into the existing American Red Cross of Greater Chicago Chapter Headquarters, known as the Rauner Center, located at 2200 W. Harrison St. within the Illinois Medical District.

This campaign will help support the following components that will result in enhanced services to area hospitals and to our valued blood donors:
The New Greater Chicago Blood Center

Blood Distribution Center. As part of the new Greater Chicago Blood Center, the existing blood distribution facility will be relocated and enhanced into a comprehensive Blood Distribution Center. Its new location and superior workflow design will dramatically improve the speed and accuracy of the distribution of blood products to local hospitals. In addition, the new space will improve blood storage capacity by as much as 100 percent and provide room for additional growth. Furthermore, the Blood Distribution Center will provide improved security for sensitive donor information and blood products and meet other emerging threats.

Reference Laboratory. A new, state-of-the-art reference laboratory will improve the Red Cross’s ability to provide rare and antigen-specific blood matches to critically-ill patients and provide the Illinois Medical District and other area hospitals with a wider range of blood products. Currently, the closest Red Cross reference laboratory is in Peoria, Illinois. This new reference laboratory will greatly benefit the Chicago region by allowing screening in the Blood Center to identify potential matches for rare antigen types. In addition, this reference laboratory will improve Red Cross’s ability to meet the diverse needs of minority populations that often have race-specific blood traits and require specialty blood products. The close proximity of the reference laboratory to several area hospitals has the potential to reduce our delivery time by as much as 300 percent for urgently needed products.

Apheresis Collection Site. Utilizing advanced medical technology, apheresis separates out certain blood components during the donation process and returns the remaining blood components to the donor. This technology is currently being used at the Rauner Center to support life-extending treatments to stage-4 prostate cancer patients. As part of the enhanced Greater Chicago Blood Center, this same facility could be used as a platelet collections site or to support a wider variety of cancer and other blood related medical treatments.

Blood Collection Staging and Donor Recruitment Facility. To further improve the region’s blood collection capacity, an enhanced blood collection staging and donor recruitment facility will provide for a secure, temperature-controlled environment to house sensitive equipment and computers utilized during blood drives. In addition, increased space is available for additional blood collection capacity.

Blood Donor Recognition & Engagement Program. As social recognition has been proven a strong motivator toward increasing blood donations, the Red Cross will include a formal recognition program as part of the Greater Chicago Blood Center. Donors will be recognized, engaged and educated about the Red Cross and the humanitarian benefits of blood donation using an interactive multimedia donor recognition wall.

Using a content management system, the Red Cross will be able to update visitors on upcoming blood drives and events in their community; showcase videos, photos and testimonials; provide information about disasters and preparedness tips; and recognize outstanding individual and organizational blood donors. In addition, the Red Cross aims to educate and inspire visitors and donors by displaying compelling Red Cross mission-related images throughout the new facility.

Enhanced Donor Recruitment and Retention

Red Cross Bloodmobile. Every weekday, the Red Cross holds approximately 600 blood drives across the nation. Approximately 80 percent of donations are made at mobile drives—held at schools, workplaces, and other facilities in local communities—in which the Red Cross bloodmobile (large vehicles which allow the donor to give right inside the vehicle) plays a critical role. Yet the Chicago region does not have a dedicated bloodmobile. Currently, when a bloodmobile is needed, it must travel from a Red Cross office in Peoria, Illinois. A Chicago-based regional bloodmobile would make the blood donation experience more convenient to our valued donors by bringing the blood drive directly to the donors where they work, play and pray. A fully loaded bloodmobile will increase our collection capacity by as much as 8,000 blood product donations annually.

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**Outreach to Diverse Populations.** Because minorities currently comprise only 10 percent of blood donors, engaging these populations is vital to maintaining a viable blood supply that is more in tune with the unique needs of minority patients—a blood supply ready to respond to an African-American child with sickle cell disease, a Hispanic man with diabetes, or an Asian mother suffering from a rare blood disorder.

The Red Cross aims to implement these new strategies by building on existing best practices in minority outreach recruitment efforts, including i) hiring bilingual staff in communities with predominantly Hispanic populations; ii) working with regionally-focused Diversity Leadership Councils; iii) developing culturally appropriate messaging and aggressive marketing through a variety of targeted channels including television, radio and print advertising; iv) developing partnerships with churches, mosques, and other places of worship; and v) engaging younger populations by awarding scholarships to students who organize blood drives or donate a certain amount of blood.

**Community Impact**

These efforts are critical to the health, wellness and safety of our entire community. A campaign of this importance requires the support of corporations, foundations, individuals and community leaders. The Red Cross is seeking partners to help realize our goals through a combination of philanthropic and sponsorship gifts, as well as in-kind donations such as products and/or labor. Simply put, a gift in support of this campaign will help achieve the following:

- **Increase storage capacity** of red blood cells by up to 100% = up to 2,000 additional lives impacted annually
- **Increase freezer capacity** of plasma units by up to 40% = nearly 650 additional lives impacted annually
- **Collect more than 8,000 blood products** through a new self-contained bloodmobile = up to 24,000 lives impacted each year
- **Reduce delivery time** of critically needed blood product to local hospitals by as much as 300%
- **Increase the number of blood units** collected by the African American community by 15% resulting in closer matches and fewer complications for sickle cell patients and patients with rare antigen profiles
- **Create a more stable blood supply** for the future by increasing the number of blood donors between the ages of 16 and 24 by 10%

Help the American Red Cross in Greater Chicago save thousands more lives each year and build a stronger, more resilient community for the next generation by supporting the Greater Chicago Blood Center Campaign today.

**Budget**

The projected cost for the Greater Chicago Blood Center associated capacity-building initiatives is estimated to total approximately $2.25 million. This will allow the American Red Cross to build-out the facility and secure the equipment and material resources necessary to grow and maintain our community’s blood supply.

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**Greater Chicago Blood Center Budget**

| Planning, Pre-Construction & Contingencies | $469,500 |
| Building Interior Renovations             | $728,500 |
| Equipment, Furniture & Fixtures           | $653,000 |
| Donor Recruitment & Retention             | $374,000 |
| **ESTIMATED GRAND TOTAL**                 | **$2,225,000** |

**For More Information:**

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