

March 20, 2020

## Coronavirus Outbreak: Help Us Continue to Deliver Our Lifesaving Mission Nationwide Due to This Public Health Emergency

Unprecedented public health concerns caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic present significant challenges as the American Red Cross continues to deliver its lifesaving mission. To meet these challenges, we are making an estimated \$150 million in urgent additional investments to support people across the U.S. who count on Red Cross blood and disaster services.

When help can't wait, people in need turn to the Red Cross. Our efforts to ensure continued delivery of the vital Red Cross mission nationwide due to this public health emergency are focused on two pillars:

- Ensure that we have a sufficient supply of blood to help patients in need and help address shortages through our blood services.
- Ensure that we can continue to provide critical relief services to people affected by disasters big and small.

### Providing Lifesaving Blood for Patients in Need

Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. requires blood—a mother giving birth, a child with sickle cell disease, or a neighbor receiving treatment for cancer—and we work to meet this constant demand, providing about 40% of the nation's blood supply.

**We are now facing a severe blood shortage due to an unprecedented number of blood drive cancellations during this coronavirus outbreak.**

Through March 19, more than 5,000 Red Cross blood drives had been canceled across the U.S. due to coronavirus concerns, resulting in some 170,000 fewer blood donations—and this number continues to grow.

**Thousands of blood drives have been canceled due to coronavirus concerns.**

To help ensure a sufficient supply of blood for patients with critical needs, we are:

- Ensuring that we have sufficient workers and resources to collect vital blood products.
- Investing in a public awareness and targeted outreach campaign to raise awareness and inspire the public to donate blood.

To mitigate the devastating impact of shortages for patients in need, we must ensure the availability of frontline workers and resources to safely collect, test and manufacture blood. We will recruit, hire and train hundreds of phlebotomists in the coming months.

The Red Cross has also implemented additional precautions to ensure blood drive safety, such as temperature checks for workers and donors; providing hand sanitizer for use before and during the donation process; spacing beds, where possible, to follow social distancing practices between blood donors; and enhanced disinfection of surfaces and equipment.

In addition, we are investing in an immediate public awareness and targeted outreach campaign to highlight this critical need and inspire the public to donate blood. Campaign strategies will include paid search, special offers for donors and added donor recruitment workers.

### **Delivering Help and Hope after Disasters**

Our disaster teams will also incorporate several new steps to adapt to the changing public health situation. We have implemented enhanced cleaning protocols for shelters, and we will begin health screenings for our disaster workers, as well as people coming into our disaster shelters. We will create isolation areas within these shelters to ensure that if people become ill, there is a safe and comfortable place for them to rest.

We are also augmenting our capabilities to provide virtual assistance for people affected by disasters. This will require added investments in workers and IT equipment, such as laptops, wireless hotspots and mobile devices. And, when requested, we will work with community partners to provide meals and relief supplies like cots, blankets and comfort kits.

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### **How You Can Help**

Help the American Red Cross continue to deliver its lifesaving mission nationwide due to this public health emergency. To donate online, visit [redcross.org/donate](https://redcross.org/donate) and select “Coronavirus Outbreak.” To donate by check, write “Coronavirus Outbreak” in the memo line, and mail it to your local Red Cross chapter or to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37839, Boone, IA 50037-0839.



**American  
Red Cross**

To ensure that we can continue to provide critical relief services to people affected by disasters big and small, we will:

- Equip and train disaster workers to provide a safe environment for those affected, as well as our volunteers and employees.
- Increase our ability to provide some key services virtually through additional investments in workers and technology.
- When requested, work with community partners to provide supplies and meals.

