

Red Cross Currents

December 2021



American Red Cross
Massachusetts

Historically Low Blood Supply Continues

The nation's blood supply has now dipped to concerning levels, and could force hospitals to hold off on essential blood and platelet transfusions for patients.

Historically low blood supply levels, not seen in more than a decade, persist for the American Red Cross, which supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood. The ongoing decline comes at a time of year when donations typically fall. Holiday get-togethers, school breaks and winter weather often lead to lower donor turnout, potentially compounding the situation.

We encourage you to check your calendar and, if possible, schedule an appointment at your earliest convenience.

To donate, you can:

- Use the **Red Cross Blood Donor App**
- Visit **[RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org)**
- Call **1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)**

Donors are asked to make an appointment to ensure the Red Cross can replenish and then maintain a sufficient blood supply.

Listen Up: Hear Regional Communications Manager Jeff Hall discuss the need for blood:

<https://www.capecod.com/newscenter/sunday-journal-red-cross-massachusetts-volunteers-aid-kentucky-residents-after-tornadoes/>



Be Positive—Like B+ Blood Donor Briana

Briana Andella, a North Reading donor, is on a mission to give in honor of her sister and nephew.

Briana writes:



“I am positive that I am petrified of, and hate, needles.

Over the years, and still to this day at 26 years old, I skip routine bloodwork, and receive only required vaccines. Needles and I do *not* get along. I suffer from myofascial pain syndrome/fibromyalgia and other health issues, which causes widespread pain, thus making needles even more difficult for me and I try to avoid them at all costs, until now.

In May 2020, my older sister, Brittany, was 7 months into her third pregnancy. An ultrasound revealed that her baby had a rare condition: fetal anemia. The fetus lacks enough healthy red blood cells, which can adversely affect the fetus and pregnancy

Brittany’s team of doctors had a plan to ensure the baby’s health and safety. Over the next month, she underwent two procedures to give her baby desperately needed in-utero blood transfusions.

In June 2020, Brittany welcomed a beautiful baby boy, Mason. Due to his condition, however, he was delivered a month early to increase his survival chances. Within minutes of being born, he was rushed to the NICU, poked and prodded by countless doctors running tests to ensure he was improving over the next month. In his first three months of life, Mason underwent five more blood transfusions before he was no longer anemic.

Brittany then set out a goal for 2021: To donate blood seven times to replenish the stock her baby needed, and to pay it forward, because one donation can save up to three lives.

Unfortunately, after two donations, the American Red Cross said that she was ineligible to donate any more due to the number of antibodies that she now carries. Brittany was heartbroken; she wanted to give back to a cause that helped give her family a precious little boy. Without hesitation, I told her I would take one for the team and finish her goal.



Briana Becomes a Blood Donor

“One week later, I had my first-ever blood donation appointment, with my sister by my side. Thanks to the amazing Red Cross phlebotomists, I pushed through every painful moment to reach my sister’s—and now my—combined goal of seven blood donations in 2021.

I donate to pay it forward to other families, and to thank other donors along with the entire Red Cross organization that saved my nephew. Mason is now the happiest, healthiest, and sweetest little boy I have ever met, and I know our family could not picture life without him.

Prior to my nephew’s diagnosis and struggles, I never considered donating blood. Since then, I am beyond thankful that not everyone has that mindset. Without others’ selflessness of



donating, my family might not have Mason.

My family and I had to endure life-altering circumstances to find the value of blood donation. I truly hope our story will help others get over their fear, and donate to help others. You never know when life will throw a curveball that may require you or someone you love to need a blood transfusion. Donate today to save another family from potential heartache, because if I can do it, *anyone* can!"

"I am positive that I am petrified of—and hate—needles, but also positive that I love my family and others more. The pain is temporary, but the impact lasts a lifetime."

COVID-19 Vaccination Deadlines

All employees and in-person volunteers who have at least one vaccination dose on or before Jan. 3, 2022 can continue working while they complete the vaccination process.

It is critical that you record and/or update your vaccination status in **HR Now** (employees) or **Volunteer Connection** (volunteers) if you have not done so already. Employees and volunteers must include supporting documentation of both the first and final dose of the vaccine, such as an uploaded image of your vaccination card. This is how the Red Cross determines who meets the requirements to continue working or volunteering.

Employees who received a first dose by Jan. 3 must reach fully vaccinated status on or before Feb. 15, 2022 with all documentation in **HR Now**. All in-person volunteers must also be fully vaccinated by Feb. 15, with their information recorded in **Volunteer Connection**.



Massachusetts Red Crossers Support Tornado Relief Efforts

Twenty-two* Massachusetts Red Crossers are among the 470 trained disaster workers currently on the ground in four states (Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee) impacted by a series of deadly tornadoes on Dec. 10.

The Red Cross is providing shelter, meals, comfort, and support to the impacted areas. With such widespread damage and thousands of homes affected, we know families will need support for weeks to come—and the Red Cross will be there for as long as we are needed. Our hearts go out to all those whose lives have been forever changed by these storms.

We are grateful to all who've raised their hand to volunteer, rolled up a sleeve to give blood, and/or made financial donations to fund our mission. If you'd like to contribute to Red Cross general disaster relief, please visit [redcross.org/MA](https://www.redcross.org/MA).

* As of Dec. 29, 2021

Listen Up: Hear Regional Communications Manager Jeff Hall discuss the tornado relief effort: <https://www.capecod.com/newscenter/sunday-journal-red-cross-massachusetts-volunteers-aid-kentucky-residents-after-tornadoes/>



Tiffany Circle Makes Gift Bags for National Guard Youth

Members of the Massachusetts Region Tiffany Circle recently made holiday gift bags for local military children, which were distributed at a holiday party in late December. Services to the Armed Forces staff worked with local Massachusetts National Guard units to identify families with young children.

The Tiffany Circle is a community of women leaders who advance the American Red Cross mission through a focused investment of time, talent, and treasure. These women follow in the footsteps of a long line of women leaders who have helped the Red Cross serve the American public with disaster assistance, blood collection, safety training, and other community assistance services.

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