

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**AMERICANS URGED TO DONATE BLOOD IN AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE HARVEY**

**Bethesda, Md.** – Hurricane Harvey and its associated flooding are impacting the nation’s blood supply. The AABB Interorganizational Task Force on Domestic Disasters and Acts of Terrorism is urging eligible donors across America, especially those with type O-positive blood, to make and keep donation appointments as soon as possible.

With blood drives cancelled for multiple days due to dangerous widespread flooding in Southeast Texas, all blood collection agencies in the U.S. are making every effort to meet the emergency blood needs of patients and ensure a sufficient blood supply in storm affected areas. It is important for blood donors to give in the coming days and weeks to meet the immediate and future needs in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. If donations are negatively impacted, the long-term needs of patients could be affected.

“We are asking all potential donors, both current and first-timers, to make a commitment to donate blood or platelets as soon as possible,” said Dennis Todd, chair of the task force.

Individuals with type O blood are critically important at this time and should schedule a blood donation appointment as soon as possible. Type O blood is the only blood type that can be safely transfused to most patients with other blood types and is frequently used in emergency situations. The task force applauds those who wish to help and encourages all eligible individuals to give blood regularly to help ensure that blood is available whenever and wherever it is needed.

The task force will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as blood needs change.

Those interested in donating blood may contact the following organizations to find a local blood drive and to schedule an appointment:

- AABB: [www.aabb.org](http://www.aabb.org); +1.301.907.6977
- America’s Blood Centers: [www.americasblood.org](http://www.americasblood.org)
- American Red Cross: [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org); +1.800.RED CROSS (+1.800.733.2767)
- Armed Services Blood Program: [www.militaryblood.dod.mil](http://www.militaryblood.dod.mil); +1.703.681.8024

The task force was formed in January 2002 to help make certain that blood collection efforts resulting from domestic disasters and acts of terrorism are managed properly and to deliver clear and consistent messages to the public regarding the status of America’s blood supply. The

task force is composed of representatives from U.S. blood services, associations and commercial entities, as well as liaisons from governmental agencies, who work together in an effort to ensure that safe and adequate blood product inventories are in place at all times in preparation for disasters. In addition, the task force operates as a mechanism to assess the need for collections and/or transportation of blood should a disaster occur.

AABB serves as the designated coordinating entity for the task force. In addition to AABB, members include AdvaMed, America's Blood Centers, American Association of Tissue Banks, American Hospital Association, American Red Cross, Blood Centers of America, College of American Pathologists, National Marrow Donor Program and the Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association. Liaisons from the following government agencies also participate in task force discussions: Armed Services Blood Program and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which includes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Food and Drug Administration.

In the event of an emergency, AABB immediately convenes a meeting of task force representatives. Local blood center(s) are responsible for ascertaining medical needs based on casualty estimates using pre-determined formulas, assessing available local supply, and communicating that information to the task force.

In a disaster, the first priorities of the interorganizational task force are to:

- Verify and communicate to the blood community the medical need for blood;
- Identify sites with existing excess blood inventory;
- Determine the need, if any, for blood shipment and the logistics of such shipments; and
- Develop public messages and facilitate the discussion of donor issues.

### ***About AABB***

AABB is an international, not-for-profit association representing individuals and institutions involved in the fields of transfusion medicine and cellular therapies. The association is committed to improving health through the development and delivery of standards, accreditation and educational programs that focus on optimizing patient and donor care and safety. AABB membership includes physicians, nurses, scientists, researchers, administrators, medical technologists and other health care providers. AABB members are located in more than 80 countries and AABB accredits institutions in more than 50 countries.

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