



**American
Red Cross**

Marketing & Communications Department
Blood Services- Penn-Jersey Region
700 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
phone: 215-451-4000
fax: 215-451-2502
www.pleasegiveblood.org

News Release

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: **Lea Stanley**
Office: (215) 451-4237
Cell: (215) 687-8965

Kristy Kane
Office: (215) 451-4240
Cell: (215) 687-8939

American Red Cross Issues Blood Supply Alert

National Blood Supply Extremely Low, Local Blood Supply at Risk

September 10, 2007 (Philadelphia, PA) – The American Red Cross Penn-Jersey Region is issuing a blood supply alert for New Jersey and five counties in southeastern Pennsylvania. All blood types are needed; however there is a critical need for Type O and Type B blood. Brigid O’Neill-LaGier, Chief Executive Officer of the Penn-Jersey Region, is appealing to people in the community to donate blood. “The blood supply is a community resource; a resource that solely relies on volunteer donors in communities across the country. Locally, we are at risk of not being able to provide enough blood of certain types needed to support patient care.”

People are urged to call 1-800-GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543) or to visit www.pleasegiveblood.org to schedule a blood donation appointment as soon as possible. You do not need to know your blood type to donate blood, but if you do and are among those blood types urgently needed, please make an appointment today. There are community blood drives and donor centers located throughout New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania seven days a week.

The American Red Cross supplies almost half of the nation’s blood supply to hospitals through 35 blood service regions across the country. Although the Red Cross system is able to ship blood when and where it is needed, volunteer blood donors of all blood types are needed everyday to replenish and sustain the blood supply both nationally and locally. “When one region or area of the country experiences a blood shortage, it puts a strain on the entire blood collection system, which could ultimately affect patient care,” says O’Neill-LaGier. “Locally, we import one-third of our blood supply from other Red Cross regions,” O’Neill-LaGier adds.

Population density, along with patient care within these regions, is vastly diverse, making blood collection an issue of supply and demand based on blood type. Currently in New Jersey and five counties in southeastern Pennsylvania (*Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties*) the need is greatest for O Negative, O Positive,

B Negative and A negative blood. O’Neill-LaGier states that “if you have one of the critical blood types we need right now or even if you don’t know your blood type, we ask you to donate blood as soon as possible. If we can not keep up with the demand for these blood types, the health of local patients may be at risk.”

To donate blood through the American Red Cross, individuals must be at least 17 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in general good health. **Eligible individuals are urged to call 1-800-GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543) or visit www.pleasegiveblood.org to find out where they can give the gift of life.**

Blood Facts

O Positive is the most common blood type. Not all racial and ethnic groups have the same mix of these blood types. The Hispanic population, for example, has a relatively higher percentage of O’s, while the Asian population has a higher percentage of B’s. The mix of different blood types in the U.S. population is:

	White	African American	Hispanic	Asian
O +	37%	47%	53%	39%
O -	8%	4%	4%	1%
A +	33%	24%	29%	27%
A -	7%	2%	2%	0.5%
B +	9%	18%	9%	25%
B -	2%	1%	1%	0.4%
AB +	3%	4%	2%	7%
AB -	1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%

Some patients require a closer blood match than that provided by the ABO positive/negative blood typing. For example, sometimes if the donor and recipient are from the same racial or ethnic background, the chance of a reaction can be reduced. That’s why an African-American blood donation may be the best hope for the needs of patients with sickle cell disease, because 98% of these patients are of African-American descent.

The demand for blood remains constant. Two thousand units of blood must be collected each and every day in New Jersey and five counties in southeastern Pennsylvania just to meet the basic needs of area hospitals and the patients they serve. **Call 1-800-GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543) or visit www.pleasegiveblood.org to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.**

INTERVIEWS AND FILMING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

###