

Out for blood

Red Cross seeking donors after holiday shortage

By Susan Buck
staff writer

It's a matter of life and death. Blood donations are up after the annual holiday blood shortage crisis but the Red Cross still needs more donors, according to Barton Kregger, associate director of the American Red Cross.

Daily, 70 hospitals in Washtenaw, Wayne, Macomb, St. Clair and Oakland counties, including Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills, wait for 1,100 pints of blood.

A lot of times they are disappointed. "Collections have increased in a major way since the holidays when we drew about half that amount," said Kregger, 40, who works for the marketing arm of the Red Cross.

On one recent day, the Red Cross collected 977 pints, "so we've got a long way to go to say this community is self-sufficient," he said.

Some 5 percent of the people who live in this area donate blood and that percentage has to increase if metropolitan Detroit is ever going to meet its needs, he said.

"Any time you can't provide for your own blood needs, you're in a precarious position," Kregger said. "We have a problem that is going to be with us until people not only donate blood themselves but talk other people into donating."

"We've never lost a patient for lack of blood," Kregger added. "We're here to relieve suffering. But, it's very traumatic for someone awaiting surgery to be told that surgery

has to be delayed for lack of blood."

KREGER IS keenly aware of the blood need. He began working as a regional representative for the Red Cross in 1974, contacting donor groups in downtown Detroit. In 1976, he was promoted to manager of blood service relations, which involved working with blood bank directors.

Kregger has held his current position since 1980. He is responsible for qualitative data, managing spread sheets and donor resources systems analysis.

"We have two sets of customers — the donors and the recipients," Kregger said. "That means that we have twice as many customers to keep happy. We're selling an intangible product."

Kregger is quick to give Red Cross volunteers credit for helping get the job done.

"The blood we draw today, gets shipped tomorrow. Our biggest users are U. of M., Henry Ford and (William) Beaumont hospitals. One pint can save three people's lives. It takes only about eight minutes to give blood," he said.

It is impossible to contract any communicable disease, like AIDS, by giving blood, Kregger said.

"There's just no chance," he said.

KREGER GREW up in Birmingham and graduated from Seaholm High School. He and wife, Marcela, married 17 years, have lived in Plymouth Township for 14 years.

Their children are John, 8, and Brad, 3.

Kregger received a bachelor of science degree in social science in 1972 from Eastern Michigan University and a master of business administration from Michigan State University last year.

The Red Cross has 12 mobile vans and 10 fixed sites in five counties.

DONOR LOCATIONS include:

- Livonia Donor Center, 29691 W. Six Mile, 494-2881 or 494-2856.
- Dearborn Donor Center, 23400 Michigan, 494-2808
- Ann Arbor Donor Center, 2725 Packard near Carpenter, 971-1500.
- Bloomfield Donor Center, 2388 Franklin, 494-2871.

A Red Cross bloodmobile is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday, Feb. 22 at William Tyndale College, 35700 12 Mile, Farmington Hills. Call Dean Alan Barr for an appointment, 553-7200.

Blood generally can be donated by anyone in good health between the ages of 17 and 70 who weighs at least 110 pounds.



Ike Williams, a Red Cross mobile blood unit assistant, weighs each unit of blood and prepares it for testing during a blood drive at North Farmington High School Feb. 2.

Agency makes donating blood easy

By Susan Buck
staff writer

It's easy to donate blood to the American Red Cross, but there are some health restrictions.

Generally anyone in good health, between the ages of 17 and 65, can donate blood every 56 days or every eight weeks but not more than five times a year, according to Jenelle Joiner.

Joiner is associate director of do-

nor resources for the American Red Cross, Southeast Michigan region.

Group O blood is always in demand because it is considered the universal donor.

"Group O positive and Group O negative are the universal types of blood that can be used immediately during an emergency," Joiner said. "Every person can accept it even though doctors can only use it with some people for a short time. The first hour is the golden hour when

stances for survival are most at risk."

Some 56 percent of the population has Type O blood.

- "THE CRITERIA for donation is very basic," Joiner said. "You come in and fill out the registration and a nurse will ask you questions about your health history."
- You may not donate blood if you:
 - have ever had cancer, jaundice or hepatitis;
 - are pregnant;
 - have had surgery in the last six months;
 - have had a tooth extraction less than three days prior;
 - are a diabetic who takes insulin;
 - weigh less than 110 pounds.

Donation is also not possible if you have had an attack of malaria in the last three years, or if you have returned from a country where malaria is a serious problem.

You may donate blood six weeks after childbirth and 48 hours after taking penicillin, either orally or by injection.

"Often, it is not the medication that you are taking but the reason why you are taking it that precludes you from donating," Joiner said.

All blood is tested for hepatitis, AIDS and syphilis, she said.

For more information, contact Joiner at 494-2791.

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5. Cut down on total fat intake from animal sources and fats and oils.
6. Avoid obesity.
7. Be moderate in consumption of alcoholic beverages.

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