

As the coronavirus pandemic has grown here in the U.S., we have seen blood drive cancellations grow at an alarming rate. Through March 18, more than 4,500 Red Cross blood drives have been canceled across the country due to coronavirus concerns, resulting in about 150,000 fewer blood donations. Here in our region we have had 74 blood drives canceled due to coronavirus concerns, resulting in 2,000 blood donations uncollected. Unfortunately, we expect this number to grow.

As the coronavirus continues to dramatically impact our communities, Red Cross needs your help ensuring we have enough blood to support hospitals here in Montana and across the country.

I am asking for your help to communicate three vital messages to the public:

- Donating blood is a safe process and people should not be concerned about giving or receiving blood during this challenging time.
- More healthy donors are needed to give now to prevent a blood shortage.
- Visit www.redcrossblood.org to find a blood drive near you or call Montana Red Cross at 800-272-6668.

Red Cross is expanding its hours at donor centers in Great Falls, Helena, Missoula, Bozeman and Kalispell to make it easier to give and more precautions have been added to keep blood recipients, staff and donors safe. Temperatures of donors are taken, volunteers use hand sanitizers, frequently change gloves and donation areas are cleaned after each donation.

Please let me know if you have questions about this critical need. Thank you for your incredible leadership during this time and for your help in sharing this message

Diane

Diane Wright | Executive Director
American Red Cross of Montana