

Dear Hospital Partners,

The South Bend Medical Foundation continues to monitor the recent outbreak of the new strain of coronavirus (COVID-19) and is adhering to all guidance from the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The impact to the national blood supply is inevitable.

We are experiencing a significant decline in scheduled appointments, an increase in “no shows” for scheduled appointments, and a number of cancelled blood drives. We believe that coronavirus will have significant negative impact on blood donations and blood inventory in the foreseeable future. In the past we have been able to buffer shortages with imports from other blood centers, but with the widespread nature of this pandemic, blood centers across the country are experiencing the same shortages.

We realize that this ongoing situation presents challenges in supporting patients at your hospital. We are committed to supporting you by providing timely information on our inventory to help you better manage your inventory and meet patient needs.

**Steps your facility can take to ensure blood supply to those most in need:**

- Update all clinical staff that the COVID-19 pandemic has put a tremendous strain on the blood supply.
- Immediately interact with your chief medical officer and hospital leadership to determine the need for additional internal communications and/or develop strategies to conserve and use less blood.
- **Do not stock blood products on your shelf for “just-in-case” scenarios.** The blood supply cannot support stocking orders at this time.
- Be prepared for days that we may not fill your entire routine order, days we may partially fill your order, and days we may only fill emergency orders.
- Lower your inventory level by approximately 25% of normal par level (i.e. manage to 75% level)
- Manage your blood orders appropriately by:
  - Minimizing ordering and instead order based on patient need;
  - Continuously assessing your blood inventory based on your hospital’s utilization needs; and
  - Being willing to receive short-date red blood cell units as well as from donors that have preexisting red cell antibodies
- Consider postponing elective surgeries that may require blood.
- Consider decreasing hemoglobin and platelet thresholds and increasing INR threshold levels while not putting patients at risk.
- Implement a prospective review of all blood product ordering before release from the blood bank. Specifically,
  - Lower transfusion triggers for RBCs and platelet transfusions;
  - For stable non-emergent patients, review orders  $\geq 2$  RBC units at one time (give one then reassess). Limit the use of O negative RBCs to women of child-bearing age and pediatric females. **Use O positive RBCs for emergent transfusion of males and post-menopausal women;**
  - **As soon as possible, switch from O RBCs to type-specific RBC transfusions in emergent transfusions or massive transfusions; and**
  - **Set goal to reduce blood product utilization by 25%.**

**SBMF's Commitment to You:**

- Engaging in transparent communication so that you know about changes in our blood supply and we know about changes in hospital blood supply
- Developing a plan to communicate what the hospital can expect to receive
- Working with each hospital on a case by case basis to help ensure business continuity during this challenging time
- We have intensified our collections efforts to mitigate the impact to blood supply including media outreach, scheduling replacement blood drives and increased communications to donors

**What Your Hospital Can Do to Help:**

- Schedule blood drives at your hospital in order to help bolster the blood supply and reach out to your local communities to participate.
- Encourage healthy family members of patients that receive blood to give back through blood donations.
- Use your communication channels to highlight the importance of continued blood donation.
- Actively promote blood donations within your hospital and your community. Ongoing blood drives are imperative to ensuring a readily available supply. **When possible avoid canceling scheduled blood drives at your hospital, and please help us raise public awareness on the critical need for healthy, eligible donors to donate blood now.**
- Read the [joint statement from America's Blood Centers](#) regarding continued need to donate blood.

AABB has published some information that may be helpful to you during this time. This includes resources on the following topics: [COVID-19](#), [patient blood management](#), [recommendations on the use of group O red blood cells](#).

Please feel free to contact a Customer Representative at 574-234-4176 or 1-800-544-0925 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this communication.

Sincerely,



Joyce Simpson, M.D.  
President  
South Bend Medical Foundation