



March 23, 2020

As the nation comes together to slow the spread of COVID-19 the Federal government has issued a series of guidance around COVID-19. That guidance includes the critical nature of blood donation to our country and comes from the Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) as directed by the Department of Homeland Security. It states:

*“If you work in a critical infrastructure industry, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule.”*

Ensuring an adequate blood supply to our communities is not only the core of our mission, but it is our commitment to our hospitals, patients and communities in times of crisis.

For that reason, Versiti Blood Centers will continue to provide its service to the community by accepting donors at all its donor center locations, as well as community blood drives, when possible.

Our dedicated teams in those locations are committed to serve donors and collect life-saving donations in environments which often will involve more than ten people within a physical space. This exception is supported by the agency noted above, as well as the directors of agencies such as HHS, FEMA, the Food and Drug Administration, and CISA of the Department of Homeland Security.

Specific language from the CISA guidance on *Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers* includes the following:

- Blood and plasma donors and the employees of the organizations that operate and manage related activities
- Workers in other medical facilities (including Ambulatory Health and Surgical, Blood Banks, Clinics, Community Mental Health, Comprehensive Outpatient rehabilitation, End Stage Renal Disease)

We have instituted additional precautions at our donor centers and mobile blood drives consistent with CDC and AABB recommendations, including: prescreening of both our staff and potential donors for possible respiratory infections and fever, instituting social distancing throughout the donation process, beds six (6) feet apart and/or separated by a partition, wiping down surface areas and beds frequently with appropriate cleaning solutions and providing only packaged snacks/drinks in our cafés.

As we look to one another for strength and support during this time of uncertainty, we are confident that our community and donors will continue to answer the call for this precious resource for which we can only rely on each other.

Respectfully,

Thomas Abshire, MD  
Chief Medical Officer, Versiti