

## SEVERE WINTER WEATHER CONTINUES TO STRESS BLOOD SUPPLY

Written by THERESA KUHLMANN  
Monday, 07 February 2011 09:29

---

All eligible donors are urged to give blood or platelets to help replenish decreasing supply

PEORIA, Ill. (February 3, 2011) – The massive winter storm that pounded much of the United States this week increased the number of canceled blood and platelet donations through the American Red Cross to nearly 23,000 since January 1, 2011. Of that number, 1,027 donations have been canceled in Illinois, eastern Iowa and eastern Missouri since Monday, January 31. The situation continues to stress the Red Cross national blood supply for more than 3,000 hospitals across the country.

“The need for blood is constant – patients can’t take a snow day,” said Shelly Heiden, CEO of the Heart of America Blood Services Region. “We want our donors to stay safe when severe weather strikes. But if it is safe to travel, it’s important to schedule a blood or platelet donation appointment to help replenish the blood supply.”

The Red Cross urges all eligible donors in unaffected areas to make an appointment to give blood or platelets today, and those in affected areas to donate as soon as travel is safe, by calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or by visiting [HTUredcrossblood.org](http://HTUredcrossblood.org)UTH. All blood types are needed, but there is a special need for donors with type O negative, A negative and B negative blood. Donations will help replenish the Red Cross blood supply to ensure that blood products are readily available for patients with serious medical needs. A listing of upcoming blood drives follows at the end of this news release.

The Red Cross overstocked major medical centers in some of the hardest hit areas in the Midwest earlier in the week expecting airport and road closures. All wheel drive Red Cross vehicles were also readied and deployed to make emergency deliveries. And local law enforcement assisted with emergency deliveries of blood products in some cases.

People have been responding to the call for blood donations, and the Red Cross is grateful to those who are stepping up to donate blood and build the blood supply back to sufficient levels. Every two seconds a patient in the United States needs a blood transfusion. Blood is perishable and has no substitute. Red blood cells have a shelf life of only 42 days and platelets just 5 days – they must be replenished constantly.

Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental permission in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements. Please bring your Red Cross blood donor card or other form of positive ID when you come to donate.

Helping those affected by the storm

The American Red Cross has also been on the ground in 19 states, offering food, comfort and a safe place to stay to people affected by the massive winter storm which has buried the country in ice and snow from the Rocky Mountains to Maine.

In Chicago alone, more than 360 people spent Tuesday night in Red Cross shelters. Many were motorists stranded by the storm. In Tulsa, Red Cross disaster workers housed almost 70

## SEVERE WINTER WEATHER CONTINUES TO STRESS BLOOD SUPPLY

Written by THERESA KUHLMANN  
Monday, 07 February 2011 09:29

---

people Tuesday night who could not make it home due to the storm.

To help people affected by this winter storm and thousands of disasters in this country and around the world, visit [HTUredcross.org](http://HTUredcross.org) UTH, call 1-800-RED CROSS, or text the word REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation.

### About the American Red Cross

Governed by volunteers and supported by giving individuals and communities, the American Red Cross is the single largest supplier of blood products to hospitals throughout the United States. While local hospital needs are always met first, the Red Cross also helps ensure no patient goes without blood no matter where or when they need it. In addition to providing nearly half of the nation's blood supply, the Red Cross provides relief to victims of disaster, trains millions in lifesaving skills, serves as a communication link between U.S. military members and their families, and assists victims of international disasters or conflicts.

###