



Devastating tornadoes activate National Blood Emergency Readiness Corps

Blood Emergency Readiness Corps responds with lifesaving blood products.

Dec. 13, 2021 – On Saturday morning, the [Blood Emergency Readiness Corps \(BERC\)](#) activated in response to the devastating tornadoes that struck several midwestern and southern states overnight. Blood products were shipped by partnering blood centers to ensure [Blood Assurance](#) in Chattanooga, Tenn. had access to a needed blood supply in support of patient transfusions in Nashville, Tenn.

“I’m extremely grateful to my fellow community blood centers that make up the Blood Emergency Readiness Corps (BERC),” said JB Gaskins, CEO of Blood Assurance, who provided blood for tornado victims. “Knowing that blood resupplies were immediately in route, already tested and processed – allowed our team to focus on getting our local supplies out to the trauma centers who were treating those seriously injured.”

The rapid response of BERC is one of its greatest advantages.

“Timing of blood availability is of highest importance when injuries occur during disasters,” said Vice President B.J. Smith of Carter BloodCare. “This is why our blood center participates in BERC. We understand the nation’s chronic blood shortage can hinder local blood providers from a swift response, when disasters of this magnitude unfold.”

This marks the third time BERC has been activated since its launch in September. The network is made up of 25 blood centers that prepare for emergency needs by collecting extra blood products on a rotating on-call schedule. [The Community Blood Center](#), [SunCoast Blood Centers](#), [Carter BloodCare](#), and [The Blood Connection](#) were the responding blood centers for this emergency.

“The Blood Connection is currently working to deliver life-saving blood to the hospital that is treating the patients of this terrible disaster,” said Delisa English, President and CEO of The Blood Connection. “While this is our first week on call with the BERC, we are ready and able to help those of the Midwest communities thanks to the loyal TBC blood donors in our communities here at home. Our hearts go out to the victims, their families, and their loved ones.”

“This is a tragic and devastating situation,” said Scott Bush, CEO of the SunCoast Blood Centers. “We are glad to be able to support first responders nationwide as part of the BERC network. This is our first week on-call as part of the BERC network, and the second time in less than two weeks that the BERC network was activated.”

The United States continues to experience a nationwide blood shortage as a result of increased need for blood products and declining donation levels. As a result, most blood centers are operating with little-to-no safety net of available blood units for emergency situations. BERC was created to solve this issue, by ensuring the nation is ready for potential emergencies.

"We are grateful for all those who stepped up to donate in the days and weeks prior to this natural disaster. Blood donors helped ensure The Community Blood Center had units of blood ready to be shipped in support of this tragic event," said John Hagins, President and CEO, The Community Blood Center. "Especially over the holiday season, we encourage those who are eligible to donate to schedule a blood donation appointment and ensure blood is available whenever and wherever it is needed."

Donating blood takes about an hour and can save up to three lives. Find a blood center near you and schedule your appointment to donate today.

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The Blood Emergency Readiness Corps was founded in 2021 to meet the immediate transfusion needs of partner centers when faced with a large-scale emergency situation that requires blood transfusions. To learn more and see a list of participating blood centers, visit bloodemergencyreadinesscorps.org.

The Community Blood Center was established in 1955 and continues today as an independent nonprofit providing a safe and reliable blood supply to nearly 30 hospitals in the Midwest. For more information, visit communityblood.org.
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SunCoast Blood Centers

For over 70 years, the SunCoast Blood Centers have been the steward of the blood supply in Southwestern Florida. We are the exclusive blood suppliers to the major hospitals and medical centers along Florida's Suncoast, one of the nation's fastest growing regions. For more information, visit www.suncoastblood.org
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Carter BloodCare is an independent, community blood center providing transfusion resources to more than 180 medical facilities in 50-plus counties of North, Central and East Texas. The non-profit 501(c)(3) organization is one of the largest blood programs in Texas, delivering more than 450,000 blood products annually to meet hospitals' requirements for their patients. Services include collection, processing, specialized laboratory testing, storage and distribution of blood and blood products. Visit CarterBloodCare.org.
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The Blood Connection

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