

PRINT- Donating blood can be rewarding

Smart phone app tracks reward points for giving blood

The next time you hear about a traffic accident where someone is seriously injured ... think about this; a single crash can require doctors use up to 50 units of blood.

According to [ImpactLife](#), about 62% of the U.S. population is eligible to give blood, but only about 3% donate at least once a year. Blood Center Manager of Public Relations Kirby Winn says blood is needed for so many situations.

"It could be a patient in treatment for cancer, someone needing surgery, if there's a trauma with blood loss and a patient comes into the emergency room, those are all reasons that don't change because it's winter weather outside, and that's why this time of year, even though we might face cancellation of blood drives and loss of appointments related to weather, we always need to maintain a strong and stable inventory."

Winn says the blood center which serves OSF HealthCare strives to have a minimum 5-day supply of all blood types. It considers inventory "critically low" at less than a 2-day supply. ImpactLife currently has a 3-day supply of type O-negative, A-negative, and AB-negative red blood cells while other types are at higher levels.

ImpactLife has been hit by blood drive cancellations and hundreds of missed appointments due to winter weather so far this year. By early February, the blood center was working to recover the loss of more than 550 donations across its four-state service region. ImpactLife also provides blood components used by 26 air and ground ambulance services in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin.

According to Winn, considering the losses due to weather, inventory levels are holding up well. But he says the supply is just one big snowstorm from having a serious issue.

The number one reason people choose to give blood is their desire to help others, but the blood center hopes its [Donor For Life](#) rewards program can motivate additional donations as well.

Winn says there are several ways donors can benefit.

More than one reward option

"The way that it works is, after giving blood, the donor will receive an email with a link to use to redeem for that electronic gift card to their choice of a variety of retailers and restaurants, place that we all know, or they can choose those points to use in our reward store, or finally, the option to give charitably to a non-profit organization."

Donors need to select the Good Giving option receive information on how to direct their charitable donation.

ImpactLife also has an easy-to-use smart phone app that tracks reward points, helps donors find nearby donor centers and blood drives, track their donation history, view wellness info, and prompt donors to give more often. The intent of the app is to keep current blood donors engaged and to attract new donors, which is especially important for the long-term stability of our region's blood supply.

ImpactLife provides blood to more than 120 hospitals and emergency medical services teams in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin including OSF HealthCare facilities. Winn says to meet patient needs for blood and blood components, the blood center requires more than 3,000 donations from volunteer blood donors *every week*. In addition to allowing for easy sign-up to donate at a local blood drive, the app also stores important health information such as heart rate, what your blood pressure was for the last donation.

For more inspiration about how your donation can make a difference, [watch Brianne's story](#).

[Sign up here](#) for an ImpactLife account or download the ImpactLife app which is available for both Android and Apple smart phones.