

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 the [Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center \(MVRBC\)](#), only 10 percent of the 37 percent of people eligible to donate actually give blood annually. Blood Center Manager of Public Relations Kirby Winn hopes an easy-to-use smart phone app called *IMPACT*, that tracks reward points for donating blood or plasma, will prompt donors to give more often and possibly attract new people to the habit of giving blood regularly.

“Every time you give blood there are points into the loyalty store and there are all kinds of items that are on there that might be of interest: apparel, hats, shirts, coolers, some technology-related items.”

MVRBC provides blood to more than seven dozen hospitals 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 2,000 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.

“You can see your heart rate, what was your blood pressure. That’s really handy for folks that are monitoring or tracking what their blood pressure (is), so those health metrics that come in as part of the mini physical prior to donation are also available through the account,” according to Winn.

The blood center welcomes feedback about the app. Eventually, Winn says it would be great to allow users to sign up for notifications.

“When the app will kind of buzz you and send a reminder that ‘hey we could really use to see you’ or an appointment reminder that would come out. We have other ways of doing that such as emails, text messages and phone calls we can make but a push notification that comes out from the app is something we would be excited to see developed.”

According to Winn, blood donors will get 100 points the first time they sign up for an online account and an additional 200 points for opting in to a text message notification from the blood center. Double Point Days are offered at times when blood supplies are historically low.

Right now MVRBC has an alert posted on its website and on the *IMPACT* app about the urgent need for O Negative blood donors. O Negative blood can help save any and all trauma patients, premature babies, and cancer patients. But it is also the only blood type that can save O Negative recipients.

When someone with O Negative blood has an accident or undergoes surgery, they must receive an O-transfusion.

For more inspiration about how your donation can make a difference, [check out Sophia's story](#). [Sign up here](#) for a Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center *IMPACT* account and download the *IMPACT* app which is available for both Android and Apple smart phones.