

NCC Blood Bank needs blood during pandemic

April 4, 2020



Just like during any natural disaster, the regional blood supply needs replenishing while communities recover, or in this case, shelter in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Kate Witthaus, Northern California Community Blood (NCCBB) CEO, said the need for blood donors has not abated during the pandemic.

“If you are feeling well and healthy, your donation is badly needed. The national blood supply is at risk due to COVID-19 mitigation efforts,” Witthaus said.

Witthaus said nationally, more than 4,000 drives have been canceled, resulting in 130,000 fewer blood donations, down from 30-40% this same time last year.

Locally, the Northern California Community Blood Bank supplies blood to hospitals in both Del Norte and Humboldt counties. The NCCBB is losing out on 38% of its donations from those ages 65 and older and 24% from those in school, due to self-quarantining.

Witthaus said it is safe to donate blood during the coronavirus outbreak, as only individuals feeling healthy and without fever are ever allowed to give blood.

“The Northern California Community Blood Bank has many decades of experience maintaining a healthy clinical environment and following strict regulatory protocol by the FDA and other health agencies,” Witthaus said, adding that there is no evidence that COVID-19 or any other coronaviruses can be transmitted by blood transfusion.

NCCBB can host blood drives while maintaining social distancing guidelines. Witthaus said blood drives bring together groups of people, but they are not “mass gatherings.” Rather, they are controlled events conducted with healthy people using appropriate infection control mechanisms to assure the safety of the blood, the donors and the staff, she said.

While some NCCBB regional blood donation events were canceled, several are still planned in Crescent City in April:

Bloodmobile will be at Wal Mart, located at 900 East Washington Blvd. from 1-6 p.m. April 3

Platelets drive at the Del Norte Fair Ground, 421 U.S. Highway 101, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. April 6, call for an appointment

Bloodmobile at Safeway, 476 M. St., from 1-6 p.m. April 7

To learn more or to sign up for a donation event, call NCCBB at 707-443-8004 or go to their website www.nccbb.org.