

*Blood donations down about 10 percent in June.*

The American Red Cross issued an emergency request for platelet and blood donors of all blood types to roll up a sleeve and give because many fewer donations than expected were received in June and the first week of July.

“We are counting on generous volunteer blood and platelet donors to step up and give now,” said Tricia Quinn, CEO for the Red Cross Midwest Blood Services Region. “Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. Each day donations come up short, less blood is available for these patients in need.”

Nationwide, donations through the Red Cross were down approximately 10 percent in June, resulting in about 50,000 fewer donations than expected. The shortfall is similar to what the Red Cross experienced in June 2012.

June can be among the most challenging months of the year for blood and platelet donations as regular donors delay giving while they adjust to summer schedules. High school and college blood drives account for as much as 20 percent of Red Cross donations during the school year. Donations from those who usually give at these drives drop by more than 80 percent when school is out for the summer. In addition, a mid-week Independence Day holiday reduced the number of blood drives scheduled in early July. Many sponsors, especially businesses, were unable to host drives because employees took extended vacations.

The Red Cross urgently needs donations to ensure an adequate blood supply is available for patients all summer long. Each day, the Midwest Blood Services Region must collect approximately 500 blood donations to meet patient needs. Eligible donors with types O negative, B negative and A negative blood are especially encouraged to give. Type O negative is the universal blood type and can be transfused to anyone who needs blood. Types A negative and B negative can be transfused to Rh positive or negative patients.

There is also an urgent need for platelet donations. Platelets—a key clotting component of blood often needed by cancer patients—must be transfused within five days of donation, so it’s important to have a steady supply of platelets on hand.