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COVID-19 Press Information

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Governor Murphy Announces Two New American Red Cross Convalescent Plasma Collection Sites in Northern New Jersey

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy, alongside Rosie Taravella, Chief Executive Officer of the American Red Cross New Jersey Region, and Shereef Elnahal, President and Chief Executive Officer of University Hospital, today announced two new American Red Cross convalescent plasma collection sites in northern New Jersey. Convalescent plasma collection will begin at the American Red Cross blood center in Fairfield and University Hospital in Newark on Monday, May 11.

In late March, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a new initiative to collect plasma from those who have recovered from novel coronavirus to treat patients with serious or immediately life-threatening COVID-19 infections. This therapy uses the blood plasma from patients who have recovered from COVID-19 to treat new patients who are severely ill with the virus. The blood plasma from recovered patients contains antibodies that may help critically ill patients fight the virus. Historically, convalescent plasma has been used as a potentially life-saving treatment in situations when new diseases or infections develop quickly, and no treatments or vaccines were available yet.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated our communities and hit North Jersey particularly hard,” **said Governor Murphy**. “By opening two convalescent plasma collections sites in North Jersey, where there is a concentration of the state’s highest infection rates and deaths, the American Red Cross can identify more

donors and better serve patients in need of this therapy. I am extremely grateful to the partnership between the American Red Cross and University Hospital for their collaboration in bringing convalescent plasma collection and therapy together for the benefit of our fellow New Jerseyans.”

“I’d like to thank Governor Murphy for his insight into this treatment’s potential, his concern for the people of New Jersey, and for taking action to bring the American Red Cross together with University Hospital in Newark for this partnership to help increase the collection of lifesaving plasma,” **said Rosie Taravella, CEO, American Red Cross New Jersey Region.** “We look forward to working with Dr. Elnahal and the team at University Hospital. In times of crisis, the Red Cross is fortunate to witness the best of humanity as people roll up a sleeve to help those in need. We greatly appreciate the generosity of the public, and those recovered COVID-19 patients who step up in an effort to help someone during this difficult time.”

“In our battle against COVID-19, we are excited to be trialing this potential life-saving therapy. The number of folks who are willing to donate their plasma to save the lives of their fellow citizens is a testament to the residents of our state,” **said Shereef Elnahal, President and CEO of University Hospital.** “Thank you to The Red Cross for joining us right here in Newark for this fight.”

The American Red Cross joined the FDA’s effort to support the collection and distribution of convalescent plasma. Together, they have worked around the clock to put this new initiative in place by establishing a process to identify, qualify and collect convalescent plasma safely from recovered COVID-19 individuals, at both Red Cross and other local blood collection organizations around the country.

University Hospital is one of the first hospitals in the state to receive the FDA approval for convalescent plasma treatment in New Jersey and remains one of only a few hospitals in the state offering this treatment. Approximately 100 COVID-19 patients at University Hospital have been treated with convalescent plasma. The effectiveness of this treatment is not yet known – but many patients that have received this therapy at University Hospital have recovered, which is a promising sign. University Hospital practitioners and researchers, along with others across the country, continue to monitor and investigate the progress of COVID-19 patients who receive this treatment.

Eligible individuals must be fully recovered from COVID-19 and symptom free, and must otherwise meet regular blood donation eligibility criteria. Individuals are encouraged to register to donate at [RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid](https://www.redcrossblood.org/plasma4covid). Once registered, someone will follow up to qualify the potential donor, and once qualified, the donor will receive an appointment time and location to donate. Please note that plasma collection is by appointment only.

Other New Jersey hospitals are participating in the FDA’s program to access convalescent plasma for their patients by accessing one of the three pathways which they can acquire plasma. If not already registered to participate with the Red Cross to access plasma, hospitals may register here:

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/dlp/plasma-donations-from-recovered-covid-19-patients/clinician-registration.html>

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