

# Health Trends

## Blood Supply Drops Along With Economy

(NAPSA)—A faltering economy affects much more than jobs and savings. In fact, the current economic climate is adversely affecting our nation's blood supply.

"About 50 percent of the blood we collect comes from corporate blood drives," said Lisa Bloch, director of communications, Blood Centers of the Pacific. "With the economy as it is, we've been hit hard here in the San Francisco area. Many companies are canceling their blood drives and focusing their priorities elsewhere."

Blood centers across the country depend on companies to conduct blood drives; corporate blood drives yield a substantial portion of the blood collected in the U.S. With businesses focusing on restructuring efforts, corporate blood drives aren't occurring as often as they had been. When the drives do take place, fewer employees are participating.

"We are seeing fallout from the current economic troubles, and have lost several donor chairpersons (organizers for the drives) with little or no notice due to layoffs, downsizing, etc.," said Nikki Outhier, director of mobile recruitment, Michigan Community Blood Centers, Grand Valley. "Because so many people are worried about keeping their jobs, donating blood is probably not a priority for them at this time. Right now we're affected, but I think the impact could be tremendous if the economy doesn't pick up quickly."

The American Association of Blood Banks (AABB), in conjunction with America's Blood Centers (ABC), kicked off a national campaign to address the need for blood donations. Television and radio public service announcements featuring celebrities Dennis Franz, Coolio and Rita Moreno are airing nationally, and blood cen-



**The need for a fresh blood supply (and new donors) is constant—regardless of the country's economic conditions.**

ters are promoting the campaign on a local level.

September 11 and its aftermath only relieved the need for blood for a short period, as fresh blood can be stored for only 42 days following donation.

"As a supplier of more than 90 percent of the blood in Northern Virginia, we're seeking assistance from the corporate community to combat our region's severe and chronic shortage of type O blood," said Brenda Tingen, manager of blood drive recruiters for Inova Blood Donor Services. "To increase the donation of all blood types, we urge the business community to actively support employee blood donations and increase blood drive sponsorship."

Our nation has a continuing critical need for blood throughout the year. About 4.5 million patients receive whole blood and red cell transfusions annually—that's approximately 34,000 units of red blood cells per day.

To learn more, or to find a blood collection site near you, visit [www.aabb.org](http://www.aabb.org) or call 1-866-FROM-YOU (376-6968).