

Blood donations encouraged as pandemic impacts supply

Banner Health partnering with Vitalant to host blood drives

PHOENIX (April 15, 2020) – With many regularly scheduled blood drives closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Banner Health is partnering with Vitalant, the region's blood bank operator, to encourage blood donations and help restore supply. Leaders at Vitalant said the limited number of donation events has significantly impacted the blood supply they maintain for area hospitals.

Vitalant leaders say blood donations are still safe. Staff take steps to ensure surfaces are thoroughly disinfected between donors and social distancing protocols are followed to minimize the potential for transmission of the new coronavirus. Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey said giving blood is considered an essential activity under the state's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy, Stay Connected" executive order that took effect March 31.

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"We all play an important role in protecting public health," Gov. Ducey said. "If you are healthy, please consider donating blood."

Federal leaders also encourage those who are able to donate to do so, reassuring the public that blood donation is safe and an "essential health care activity."

Upcoming Blood Drive:

[Banner Boswell Medical Center](#) (13180 N 103rd Dr., Sun City, AZ 85351)

- Thursday, April 23, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Memorial Hall (south of the main hospital near Lot J)

Vitalant asks potential donors to [make an appointment](#) on its website ahead of the event to prevent crowds from forming.

"Our blood collection sites are a 'first response' action to this outbreak versus a gathering that needs to be avoided," said Ralph Vassallo, MD, Vitalant's chief medical and scientific officer. "If you're healthy, you're needed now more than ever. We cannot let it get to the point where there's no blood available for trauma patients, those undergoing cancer treatment and patients who need regular, ongoing blood transfusions just to survive."

Headquartered in Arizona, Banner Health is one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country. The system owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals, Banner Health Network, Banner – University Medicine, academic and employed physician groups, long-term care centers, outpatient surgery centers and an array of other services; including Banner Urgent Care, family clinics, home care and hospice services, pharmacies and a nursing registry. Banner Health is in six states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming. For more information, visit www.BannerHealth.com.

Vitalant ("vye-TAL-ent") is the nation's second largest community blood service provider, supplying comprehensive transfusion medicine services for nearly 1,000 hospitals and health care partners for patients in need across 40 states. Vitalant inspires local communities to serve the needs of others and transform lives through the selfless act of donating blood. Every day, almost 5,000 blood donations are needed to meet the needs of people throughout the country, and Vitalant's 800,000 donors supply 1.8 million donations a year. In addition to blood products, Vitalant offers customers transfusion services, medical consulting, quality guidance, ongoing education, research and more. For more information and to schedule a donation, visit vitalant.org or call 877-258-4825 (877-25-VITAL). Join the conversation about impacting the lives of others on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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For further information: media@bannerhealth.com

<http://bannerhealth.mediaroom.com/blooddonations0415>