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News Releases

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New Jersey in Need of Blood Donations

In the aftermath of Hurricane Irene and ongoing severe flood conditions, New Jersey is in need of blood donations. The Department of Health and Senior Services is asking residents to contact their nearest blood center or the American Red Cross to take part in blood drives or make an appointment to donate blood.

"As a result of Hurricane Irene, numerous blood drives were canceled around the state, limiting the blood supply for hospitals and other health care facilities," said Health and Senior Services Commissioner Mary O'Dowd. "Recognizing continuing flood conditions and road closures, people who want to donate should call ahead to make sure your local blood center is open and make an appointment to give blood."

People who want to schedule an appointment to donate blood or locate a blood drive can find a location near them by calling 1-800-Red Cross or by visiting: www.redcrossblood.org/make-donation.

People may also contact any one of New Jersey's blood centers by visiting: <http://www.nj.gov/health/njsave3lives/centers.shtml>

"If you have never donated before, now is the time to consider becoming a regular blood donor in your community," Commissioner O'Dowd said.

Most people age 16 and older who are in good health and weigh at least 110 pounds are eligible to donate blood. Donations of all blood types are needed, especially O negative blood because it is rare. People with this blood type are universal donors who can donate red blood cells to almost all the other blood types. O negative is the most preferred of all the blood types for cases involving emergencies, accidents and blood transfusion of babies and infants.

In New Jersey 60% of residents are eligible to donate blood, however only 3.6 percent donate on a regular basis.

If you are a business interested in conducting a blood drive, the New Jersey Workplace Blood Donor Coalition encourages you to contact a blood center in your area. For a Blood Drive Tool Kit, downloadable videos and other donor recruitment materials and a list of blood centers in New Jersey go to www.njsave3lives.com.