



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **Blood shortage continues as extreme weather cancels donation events nationwide**

*Vitalant will host nearly 300 donation events across New Mexico between now and October 7<sup>th</sup>*

**Santa Fe, NM** – For the last 18 months, hospitals around the country have struggled with a shortage of donated blood due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, researchers estimate the health crisis has caused blood donations to decline by anywhere from [30% to 70%](#) in most developed nations, while U.S. hospitals have seen a [significant rise](#) in demand for surgeries that require blood products. And in recent months, a series of hurricanes, large-scale wildfires, and other extreme weather have forced blood donation groups to cancel hundreds of additional donations events, though these disasters make the need for blood products even more urgent.

To that end, the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) and the Department Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) continue to partner with Vitalant to raise awareness of the critical need for blood donors and highlight donation events across the state. Between now and October 7<sup>th</sup>, Vitalant will host nearly 300 donation events across New Mexico (see attached list).

To learn more and to schedule an appointment, please visit [vitalant.org](https://vitalant.org) or call 877-25-VITAL (877-258-4825) or the local number at 505-246-1457. Residents can also click [here](#) to access Vitalant’s donations portal, where you can search for donation events based on your zip code.

“The need for Type 0 blood is especially urgent,” said a **spokesperson for Vitalant**. “Type 0 is the most transfused blood type, and O Negative is what emergency room personnel reach for when there isn’t time to determine a patient’s blood type.”

## COVID-Safe Practices

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the U.S. Surgeon General and Federal Emergency Management Agency have designated blood donation as an essential activity. And to ensure the safety of donors, patients, and staff, Vitalant donation centers and blood drives have consistently observed rigorous precautions, including:

- Taking donors' temperatures upon check-in
- Requiring face masks for both donors and staff
- Disinfecting donor-touched areas after every donation
- Practicing social distancing

“Working in emergency management, one of my first thoughts when I see a major disaster is that I hope and pray that local hospitals have all the supplies they need to perform live-saving operations,” said **DHSEM spokesperson Brian Sayler**. “No amount of time and money can replace our supply of donated blood – the victims of these disasters rely on all of us to donate when we can.”

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