

Physician MEMO

To | All Medical Staff
From | Julie Simmons, MPH, MT(ASCP)SBB Manager, Transfusion Medicine
Bruce Walley, MD SR VP Medical Affairs
Date | January 11, 2012
Re | Shortage of Group O Packed Cells

Practice Alert

Shortage of Group O Packed Cells

S Situation

The American Red Cross is experiencing a shortage of packed red blood cells, especially Group O, Rh positive and Rh negative.

B Background

Several weeks ago, there was a severe wreck that depleted the O, Rh negative packed red blood cells in the Asheville area which impacted the supply within the state. There is also a typical drop in blood donations during the Christmas and New Year holidays. Despite efforts to offset this drop the Red Cross is experiencing a reduction in inventory of red blood cells. The recent holidays also fell on Sundays, and the Red Cross "observed" holidays fell on the following Mondays, which further reduced blood collection capacity. Additionally, during the holiday season no high school or college blood drives were held and a large percentage of blood is collected in these environments.

A Assessment

The inventory of Group O, Rh positive and Rh negative packed cells is at a decreased level. The Red Cross is maintaining inventory to handle emergency transfusions. The Blood Bank is maintaining an inventory of Group O, Rh positive and Rh negative but also at decreased levels. Some patient orders may need to be obtained directly from the Red Cross instead of the Blood Bank inventory.

R Recommendation

Due to the shortage of Group O, Rh negative and Rh positive packed red blood cells, patient orders will be reviewed. The patient's physician may be contacted to evaluate the need for the number of units requested. Future orders and orders to hold will be documented but units will not be crossmatched until the units are needed.

Q Questions

Please direct any questions to Julie Simmons at 718-3727.