



For Release

April 21, 2021 1 pm Eastern time

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Blood Centers of America Recognizes Outstanding Partners During the COVID-19 Pandemic With Critical Infusion Award

WEST WARWICK, R.I., **April 21, 2021** – Citing exceptional efforts and partnership, Blood Centers of America (BCA) is recognizing 10 of its supply partners with the newly announced Critical Infusion Award, for helping to overcome the unique challenges the pandemic posed to the blood and plasma donation field.

BCA works with hundreds of suppliers that all kept the supply chain moving during critical months of the pandemic, but recipients of the Critical Infusion Award stood out for going above and beyond to solve logistics, testing and equipment supply challenges. Thanks to these suppliers, BCA was able to help facilitate/coordinate collections and help ensure that COVID-19 convalescent plasma (CCP) was available for use in treating patients with the virus —while helping to maintain a secure and stable supply of blood and plasma for hospitals.

John Hagins, BCA Board Chairman noted that, “We received so many thank you notes from grateful patients that received CCP and felt that it saved their lives. BCA and its member blood centers recognize that we could not have collected and distributed CCP to patients in need without our supplier partners supporting us behind the scenes.”

As providers of over 50% of the total American blood supply, BCA members and its other affiliated community blood centers led the way in collecting CCP for early COVID-19 treatments. Centers worked hand-in-hand with partners to ramp up collection from zero to more than 20,000 doses per week.

“The pandemic did not stop the demand for blood and plasma donations – in fact, it significantly increased it in some cases. We are so grateful for our partners across the supply chain, who all kept these critical supplies moving despite significant, unprecedented challenges,” said BCA President and CEO Bill Block. “Congratulations to our Critical Infusion Award recipients. We commend your resiliency and flexibility throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.”

BCA applauds the following companies as Critical Infusion Award recipients:

Logistics and Distribution Companies

- **Bio Pharma Logistics**: A small transport logistics company with a big footprint, BPL was the logical choice for CCP transport and storage, as they transport a majority of BCA’s recovered plasma. They have been a wonderful partner in this effort and have accommodated dozens of pickups at existing and new locations.

- **Henry Schein Medical**: As a national distributor of medical supplies, Henry Schein Medical demonstrated their commitment to BCA by providing availability of clinically acceptable products for centers to purchase when the primary brands of products were not available. In a very challenging distribution environment with limited availability of PPE products and overwhelming demand from their customers, they identified BCA as a front-line customer.
- **MNX Global Logistics**: MNX is a provider of specialized, expedited transportation and logistics services, shipping critical and time sensitive blood components. In 2020, MNX processed over 17K shipments within the BCA network. Despite challenges resulting from reduced airline availability during the pandemic, MNX was able to utilize various courier networks to move product and ensure the packages arrived on time.
- **OptiFreight® Logistics**: In 2020, the BCA network shipped over 212,000 packages, which is ~10% more than the previous year as a result of the partnership with OptiFreight® Logistics. They recognized the importance and time sensitivity for blood centers to ship critical supplies and convalescent plasma to hospitals, which was heightened during the pandemic.
- **Thermo Fisher Scientific**: A national distributor of lab supplies for BCA, Thermo Fisher Scientific prioritized BCA for various PPE products early in the pandemic. They allocated and provided over 2 million ear loop masks, which were in very high demand throughout the pandemic. They allocated other PPE products such as hand sanitizer and surface disinfectants when these products could not otherwise be sourced.

Diagnostics Companies

- **Abbott**: Abbott released antibody tests on the ARCHITECT and the Alinity platforms used by BCA. This shortened implementation time for BCA blood testing significantly. Abbott's rapid antigen test was also critical for BCA during the pandemic.
- **Ortho Clinical Diagnostics**: Ortho's high-volume COVID-19 IgG antibody assay was the first of its kind to be authorized to test donor blood units as a manufacturing step to determine high or low titer of CCP before release to hospitals and patients, which was critical for BCA to quickly supply plasma to COVID-19 patients in need. Ortho's antigen test, with utility for mass-scale testing was readily available at centers across the country, was also a critical asset to BCA during the pandemic.
- **Roche Diagnostics**: Roche produced 15 diagnostic solutions for COVID in 2020 – two of which are used to manufacture convalescent COVID-19 plasma. A significant amount of the COVID molecular testing in the US is performed on a Roche platform, which was critical during the pandemic for CCP treatment.

Medical Plastics Manufacturers

- **Terumo Blood and Cell Technologies**: As BCA's supply partner for automated collections of platelets, plasma and red cells, Terumo Blood and Cell Technologies scaled up the production of disposable sets by 440% to support forecasted needs for CCP collections. They hired and trained new staff to support round the clock shifts to meet capacity for the collection of CCP.
- **Fresenius Kabi**: Fresenius Kabi accelerated manufacturing of collection sets to support BCA's efforts to collect lifesaving CCP. Demonstrating flexibility and understanding of unique staffing challenges, they shifted their production schedule and ramped up production over 300% of the specific kits needed significantly, for the collection of CCP.

About Blood Centers of America

Blood Centers of America (BCA) is the largest blood supply network in the U.S., uniquely positioned to sustain, mobilize, and advocate for the nation's blood supply. Our 60+ independent community blood centers collect and distribute over 50% of the blood supply in the US, delivering reliable service with a profound commitment to the communities we serve. Recently, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have helped spur lifesaving donations of convalescent plasma, which carries infection-fighting antibodies from people who have recovered from COVID-19.

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