



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[BERC B-roll can be found here](#)

[San Diego Blood Bank B-roll can be found here](#)

## SAN DIEGO BLOOD BANK JOINS BLOOD EMERGENCY READINESS CORPS

*Partnership of community blood centers across U.S. forms nation's first  
emergency blood reserve*

**SAN DIEGO (August 2, 2023)** – San Diego Blood Bank (SDBB), the primary provider of blood products to the majority of hospitals in San Diego has joined the [Blood Emergency Readiness Corps](#) (BERC), a first-in-the-nation partnership with other community-based blood centers across the nation to help prepare for emergencies that may lead to a high demand for blood transfusions.

Launched in September 2021, BERC is a cooperative of currently 36 blood centers in more than 40 states that have committed to collecting extra blood units on a rotating, “on call” schedule. The extra blood products will be held in reserve for any critical-need scenario, like a mass shooting, natural disaster, or any other large crisis.

As part of the BERC program, San Diego Blood Bank will work on an on-call schedule every three weeks to assist with any blood donations needs across the country. When an emergency hits, blood is released to the local blood center in need immediately. All participating blood centers will know exactly how much emergency blood is available and where it will come from. If the blood units are not used for an emergency, they are returned to the blood center that collected them to be used for general needs.

In many disasters and critical-need scenarios – like a mass shooting, tornado, or large-scale car crash – a great deal of blood may be needed immediately. With current donation rates nationally, most blood centers don't have enough blood on their shelves to handle these types of disasters and are forced to request blood units from neighboring blood collectors. By creating BERC, blood will be ready and available if needed, without delays and uncertainty.

Before BERC, blood centers facing a mass need event relied on other blood centers to send additional units from their available inventory – but only if excess was available to share. Now, participating BERC members will rotate and store blood on a three-week rotating schedule. If needed, that blood will be offered to other parts of the country in response to a mass transfusion event.

“As we work to protect our region's blood supply, we now have a safety net in the event of a mass trauma incident,” said Doug Morton, San Diego Blood Bank Chief Executive Officer. “We are also better prepared to serve the public – nationally if need be – to assist in the event of a mass trauma outside of our area.”

“The County of San Diego supports all programs that help create a sustainable and diverse blood supply for the region,” said Dr. Eric McDonald, interim director of the County Health and Human Services Agency. “We applaud the San Diego Blood Bank in these efforts to continue to serve the communities of San Diego. Like the Community Guardians Program that was created during the pandemic, this is another great example of how we can make a collective impact in our community.”

Since its formation in September of 2021, BERCC has already responded to three mass casualty events in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Michigan.

To be eligible to donate blood, you must be at least 17 years old, weigh at least 114 pounds, and be in general good health. Eligible blood donors are encouraged to schedule an appointment at [SanDiegoBloodBank.org](https://www.sandiegobloodbank.org) or calling 619-400-8251. Walk-ins are welcome.

### **About the San Diego Blood Bank**

San Diego Blood Bank is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization also operating as Southern California Blood Bank, serving hospitals throughout Southern California. San Diego Blood Bank is dedicated to community health by providing a reliable supply of blood to patients in need. Our vision is to further ensure the health of our community by simultaneously delivering related health and wellness education and services and collaborate with various partners in medical research. San Diego Blood Bank currently operates nine fixed site donation locations and 10 bloodmobiles. For more information about SDBB, visit [SanDiegoBloodBank.org](https://www.sandiegobloodbank.org) or connect with us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/sandiegobloodbank), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/sandiegobloodbank), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/sandiegobloodbank) and [Linkedin](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sandiegobloodbank).

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