



HISPANIC FAMILY CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY
Providing the community with a broad range of culturally relevant social services and advocacy programs that promote and encourage empowerment and self sufficiency since 1976.

News Release

Hispanic Family Center to Hold Community Blood Drive in Response to the American Red Cross's Local Blood Supply Alert

Local Blood Supply Extremely Low, Health of Local Patients May Be at Risk

February 20, 2009 (Camden, NJ) – The Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey will team up with the Penn-Jersey Region's American Red Cross to host a community blood drive at its Family Success Center, located at 2850 Federal Street in Camden, on February 26, 2009 from 11am to 5pm. The blood drive is being organized in response to the blood supply alert for New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania issued by the Red Cross. HFC Executive Director, Elsa Candelario anticipates a successful annual event, "We know how important it is to increase the blood supply in Camden. The agency hopes to raise awareness with this event and draw a wealth of support from the community." Family Success Center manager, Ivette Cruz states, "As a community, we have the capacity to come together to assist organizations, like the Red Cross, to increase the blood supply in the region. It's important for the Hispanic Family Center to help promote this issue because it may ultimately affect the health of our consumers."

All blood types are needed; however there is a critical need for Type O blood. Brigid O'Neill-LaGier, Chief Executive Officer of the Penn-Jersey Region, is appealing to people in the community to donate blood. "The blood supply is a community resource; a resource that solely relies on volunteer donors in communities across the country. Locally, we are at risk of not being able to provide enough blood of certain types needed to support patient care." Candelario adds "Mobilizing Hispanics is especially crucial because many have type O, the most common type of blood." People are urged to call 856-963-0270 to schedule a blood donation appointment for Thursday, February 26, 2009 at the Hispanic Family Center located on 2850 Federal Street in Camden, NJ.

Population density, along with patient care within the regions, is vastly diverse, making blood collection an issue of supply and demand based on blood type. Currently in New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania, the need is greatest for O Negative and O Positive blood. O'Neill-LaGier mentions that "if you have one of the critical blood types we need right now or even if you don't know your blood type, we ask you to donate blood as soon as possible. If we can not keep up with the demand for these blood types, the health of local patients may be at risk."

Many factors influence why the blood supply is at critical levels locally making this a challenging time for the American Red Cross Penn-Jersey Region to collect the blood needed. Despite this fact, the demand for blood remains constant. 2,000 units of blood must be collected each and every day in New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania just to meet the basic needs of area hospitals and the

patients they serve. “In New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania, we have been struggling to meet our local hospital blood supply needs for various reasons – severe weather, blood drive cancellations, and blood donors not keeping their appointments. It is critical that more people in our local communities donate blood right now,” O’Neill-LaGier adds. For this reason, the Hispanic Family Center advocates that all eligible adults in the Camden area stop by the Family Success Center to give blood. To be considered eligible to donate blood, individuals must be at least 17 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in general good health. Eligible individuals are urged to call 856-963-0270 to find out how they can give the gift of life.

Blood Facts

O Positive is the most common blood type. Not all racial and ethnic groups have the same mix of these blood types. The Hispanic population, for example, has a relatively higher percentage of O’s, while the Asian population has a higher percentage of B’s. Some patients require a closer blood match than that provided by the ABO positive/negative blood typing. For example, sometimes if the donor and recipient are from the same racial or ethnic background, the chance of a reaction can be reduced. That’s why an African-American blood donation may be the best hope for the needs of patients with sickle cell disease, because 98% of these patients are of African- American descent.

The Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey is a multi-service agency dedicated to providing the community with a broad range of culturally relevant social services and advocacy programs that promote and encourage empowerment and self-sufficiency. To meet this goal the Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey offers over 30 programs including after school programs, employment and training programs, health education and prevention services, mental health services, senior services and substance abuse treatment. Each year the Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey serves over 6,000 individuals and families.

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