

# News Release

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## For Immediate Release

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## **Forest Service Schedules Blood Drive at Critical Time** *Type O-negative supply in critical condition*

**Nelsonville, OH** – Severe winter weather this month has put a serious strain on the blood supply in Ohio. To help deal with the current situation, the employees of the Wayne National Forest Headquarters and Athens Ranger District on US Hwy 33 is holding a blood drive on Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup> from 9-3.

The snow and ice that has hit the central Ohio area has forced a number of large blood drives to be canceled or delayed. The cancellations have led to the loss of approximately 1,450 donations state-wide since the beginning of February. Because each donation can be separated into three different parts and used with different patients, the donation loss totals more than 4,300 blood products for patients at 119 hospitals in Ohio.

“With more winter weather predicted to be on the way for Ohio, we are concerned that more drives may cancel in the coming days or that people will decide not to donate because of the weather,” said Rodney Wilson, spokesperson for the Central Ohio Region.

Blood type O-negative is quickly diminishing, with less than half a one day supply currently on the shelves. This type is known as the universal red blood cell which can be transfused to any patient in an emergency situation. Four other blood types are also below minimum inventory standards today and will be dangerously depleted if the Red Cross cannot collect blood due to continued drive cancellations.

“While we do not want anyone to jeopardize their safety by traveling to a blood drive in this weather, the need for blood never stops and patients are depending on blood products for treatment or survival. We hope that those who are able will donate in the next few days to help rebuild the community supply,” said Wilson.

Donations of all blood types are needed immediately, and the Red Cross is urging all who can donate blood or platelets to do so as soon as possible. Blood donors must be at least 17 years old, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and be in good general health. To

schedule an appointment for this blood drive or another in your area please contact the Athens County American Red Cross at (740) 593-5273.

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