



APR 10 2019

Dear Emergency Management Agency:

I am writing to make you aware of an important aspect of emergency public health preparedness that needs attention at the State, Territorial, Tribal and Local levels. Ensuring patient access to needed blood and blood products is a critical element of emergency public health preparedness and your assistance is needed to ensure that State, Territorial, Tribal and Local emergency planning efforts appropriately prioritize the availability and accessibility of safe blood and blood products during disasters.

Blood and blood products are an essential treatment in trauma and are also needed to meet the needs of patients with chronic conditions. In the U.S., blood is typically collected, processed, and stored at regional non-profit blood centers and is distributed to hospitals on a daily or weekly basis. In some cases, a blood center may be located several hours away from the hospitals it supplies; thus, problems with the local infrastructure (e.g., road damage, power outage, flooding) arising during a disaster can create a set of logistical challenges that can impact the blood supply. Our attention must be to maintain an adequate availability and accessibility of blood and blood products.

I respectfully request your assistance in working with the community blood centers in your region to ensure that blood and blood products are available where and when they are needed in a disaster. This can be accomplished by integrating the community blood centers responsible for the collection and distribution of blood and blood products into your emergency management planning efforts, including the addition of blood-related scenarios in your drill and exercise programs.

I encourage all community blood centers to contact their State, Territorial, Tribal, or Local emergency management agencies to participate in the emergency management planning process and to educate emergency management personnel on the unique needs of collecting and distributing blood and blood products to victims of a disaster while maintaining routine support for ongoing patient care.

HHS asks that your office consider developing an operating plan to ensure that Food and Drug Administration (FDA) licensed or registered blood centers are appropriately prioritized for access to fuel, emergency communications equipment and frequencies, transportation during disasters, early restoration of utilities, and re-entry access into affected disaster areas. I extend

my sincere appreciation for your consideration of this important issue and thank you for your commitment to achieving a nation prepared.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Giroir", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brett P. Giroir, M.D.
ADM, USPHS
Assistant Secretary for Health

cc: Regional Health Administrator
Regional Emergency Coordinator
AABB Disaster Task Force