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**BLOOD BANK OF HAWAII AND LT. GOVERNOR JOSH GREEN
URGE HEALTHY RECOVERED COVID-19 PATIENTS
TO HELP THEIR COMMUNITY “FIGHT COVID WITH COVID”**

*****Convalescent Plasma Donations Will Aid COVID-19 Hospitalized Patients*****

HONOLULU, HI (January 13, 2021) --- Blood Bank of Hawaii announces its “Fight COVID with COVID” campaign to rally recovered patients to donate their COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma. This plasma – CCP – is the liquid part of blood that is rich with antibodies and still considered one of the primary treatments for hospitalized COVID-19 patients. Hawaii needs to increase its current CCP inventory due to a triple threat: new, more contagious COVID-19 strains on the U.S. Mainland; the current local spike in case count and infection rate that will result in higher numbers of patients being hospitalized; and the depletion of the national CCP stockpile.

The Blood Bank of Hawaii has a goal of 100-150 new donors a month, moving forward. CCP can be donated every 28 days, and of 186 total donors, 81 repeat donors have donated two or more times. CCP donors must meet blood donor eligibility criteria, plus have lab documentation and be healthy and symptom-free for 28 days in order to be able to donate. To show its appreciation, Blood Bank of Hawaii will provide CCP donors with a non-transferable \$25 Foodland gift certificate.

“We are so thankful for the many individuals like Lt. Gov. Josh Green who came forward to donate their CCP,” said Blood Bank of Hawaii President and CEO Kim-Anh Nguyen. “They are community heroes who chose to help others win their fight against the virus, and we hope this campaign will inspire others to do the same.” Nguyen wants to spread the word that time is of the essence, because of FDA guidelines related to COVID-19 vaccines. “Donors can get vaccinated with either the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and give blood, platelets or plasma with no waiting period,” she said. “But CCP donors who receive either vaccine must be deferred due to the lack of research regarding the impact of the vaccine on their antibodies.”

During last summer’s local spike in cases, Blood Bank of Hawaii was able to combine local CCP with imports from the mainland to cover our state’s needs. To date, 1,250 total doses have been distributed to 11 hospitals statewide and 1 California hospital.

The Hawaii Department of Health, hospitals and physicians’ offices have been helping to notify patients about CCP. An important part of this campaign will be to follow up on that initial contact using a community-centered approach, with discussions and presentations with Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians and Filipinos, who make up two-thirds of all COVID-19 patients in our state. The multi-channel integrated campaign includes a digital toolkit that Blood Bank staff will share with community leaders and supporters. Blood Bank of Hawaii appreciates the collaboration and assistance provided by community organizations such as the Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii, the Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Hawaii COVID-19 Response Recovery and Resilience Team, and Pasefika Empowerment Association (PE’A), and looks forward to expanding community partnerships to save lives.

Lt. Gov. Josh Green, who is coordinating Hawaii’s vaccination efforts, has a unique perspective as a COVID-19 patient, community physician and recent CCP donor. “It’s an easy process, takes about an hour and you will directly contribute to the care of your community.” he said.



Recently, CCP collection sites expanded from one to three on Oahu: Young Street Donor Center, Dillingham Donor Center and Waikele. In addition, machines designed for apheresis, the process that painlessly separates plasma from blood cells and then returns the blood cells back into the body, are shipped over on every neighbor island drive so that neighbor island residents can also participate. Residents in Hawaii Island, with the second highest number of COVID-19 cases, will have the opportunity to donate blood and CCP on January 19 to 21 in Hilo, and on February 23 to 25 in Kona.

All CCP donations require a pre-scheduled appointment. Residents who tested positive for COVID-19 and want to help are urged to contact Blood Bank of Hawaii via phone at 808-848-4706 or email covidplasma@bbh.org. Visit bbh.org/FightCovid to learn more. Individuals with questions about operations during COVID-19 may visit bbh.org/COVID-19 or connect via social media. Follow Blood Bank of Hawaii @BloodBankHawaii.

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About Blood Bank of Hawaii

Founded in 1941, BBH is a non-profit organization committed to providing a safe and reliable supply of blood, blood products and related transfusion services to Hawaii's patients. BBH is licensed and regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, accredited by AABB, and a founding member of America's Blood Centers, the nation's largest network of community-based blood programs. For more information, visit BBH.org.