



**University Community
Hospital**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 7, 2009

UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL TEAMS UP WITH FLORIDA BLOOD SERVICES TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEER BLOOD DONORS DURING NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR MONTH

(St. Petersburg, FL: 12/31/08) Throughout the month of January, Blood Centers, Hospitals and blood transfusion recipients across the country recognize and thank volunteer blood donors through the annual celebration of National Blood Donor Month. At 10 am on Tuesday, January 13, 2009, University Community Hospital (UCH) is hosting a blood donor recognition in their auditorium. All blood donors, transfusion recipients and medical staff are invited to attend.

Guest speakers will include Karen O'Sullivan, RN a UCH employee and Cystic Fibrosis patient who received transfusions during her double lung transplant. In addition, a proclamation from Mayor Pam Iorio will be presented. A reception with donuts and coffee from Dunkin' Donuts will follow.

This National Blood Donor Month ceremony is being held in conjunction with the first UCH blood drive of the new year on Tuesday and Wednesday, January 13 and 14, 2009. A donor room will be set up inside the UCH auditorium from 8 am to 4 pm on Tuesday and from 9 am to 5 pm on Wednesday. All eligible blood donors are invited to participate.

All lifesaving donors in January will receive a coupon good for a free pound of coffee courtesy of Dunkin' Donuts! In addition, FBS will provide donors with an insulated travel mug as well as a wellness checkup of blood pressure, pulse, temperature and iron count, including a cholesterol screening.

Generally, healthy people, age 16 (with parental permission) or older, who weigh at least 110 pounds can be blood donors. For further eligibility questions people can call 1-800-68 BLOOD (25663) or visit www.fbsblood.org

This year alone, as many as five million patients in the United States will require blood transfusions, as accident victims, people undergoing surgery, and patients receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer and other diseases. Yet, according to a study by W. Riley (et al) published in the July 2007 issue of *Transfusion*, only 37 percent of the

population is eligible to give blood. However, less than 10 percent of the eligible population gives annually. Everyone, whether it is realized or not, depends on blood. Every two seconds, someone needs blood. Each day, patients across the country receive approximately 39,000 units of this lifesaving resource.

Here in Florida, as the new year begins and our winter population increases, so does the demand on our community's blood supply. With more than 800 donations needed daily to save the lives of patients throughout the Tampa Bay area, FBS is requesting the vital support of all eligible citizens to help prevent a blood shortage. And there is no better time to start than during National Blood Donor Month which begins January 1.

"If it weren't for the generosity of millions of American blood donors, people with disorders such as Thalassemia and Sickle Cell would not live a productive life," states Donald Doddrige, FBS CEO and current President of America's Blood Centers (ABC). "Many more are alive today because there was blood on the shelf when they needed it after an accident or emergency surgical procedure. FBS would like to thank those who have continued to support the cause, and ask those who have not previously donated, to start a new habit in 2009: giving the gift of life by becoming a regular blood donor."

Headquartered in St. Petersburg, FBS currently provides blood and blood components to patients at 61 hospitals and other ambulatory healthcare facilities in 14 Northwest Florida, Southern Alabama and Tampa Bay counties. After a merger is finalized in the new year with Southeastern Community Blood Center in Tallahassee, a combined total of almost 300,000 volunteer donations will be needed annually to serve patients at 84 hospitals in 40 counties.

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Additional blood supply information is available at www.fbsblood.org

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