



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 26, 2008

**FLORIDA BLOOD SERVICES AND
NORTHWEST FLORIDA BLOOD CENTER
FORM REGIONAL ALLIANCE**

Two of Florida's leading blood centers, Florida Blood Services (FBS) and Northwest Florida Blood Center (NFBC), each of which have over 60 years of community based blood banking expertise, are merging to better serve the donors, patients and healthcare facilities in our communities. The merger will result in an even stronger regional commitment in providing blood and blood components to the local communities, while capitalizing on the latest technologies. "FBS has been providing testing services for over a decade for the blood center and that has cemented a strong mutual alliance," said Northwest Florida Blood Center CEO Eugene E. Roberts, Jr. Florida Blood Services is the third largest donor testing service in the United States. "The growth of the market, coupled with the more complex testing and regulations from the government, has required all blood banks to operate on a much more sophisticated level with very thin margins," said Roy Bertke, Chairman of the FBS Board of Directors.

"This is a challenge we feel uniquely qualified to meet. By merging our operations, we will be better able to take advantage of the economies of scale and offer more competitive pricing in the marketplace," said Don Doddridge, CEO of FBS. "We have new strategies to implement that will benefit residents throughout the entire service area" said Joseph D. Smith, President of the NFBC Board of Directors. "We will strategically position ourselves to keep pace with the rapid growth of the area and are moving forward to protect the best interests of our residents and our employees."

Both Doddridge and Roberts have distinguished themselves in decades-long careers in the industry. Doddridge, with more than 37 years experience, has held leadership positions in many professional organizations including the American Association of Blood Banks (past President); current President of America's Blood Centers and is a past President of the Florida Association of Blood Banks. Roberts, with more than 36 years experience, is also past President of the Florida Association of Blood Banks.

FBS is headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida, and provides blood and blood components to patients at 38 hospitals and 40 ambulatory health facilities in Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco and Pinellas Counties. FBS is an official donor center and apheresis center for the National Marrow Donor Program and is one of only six U. S. blood center hubs designated to provide blood to the military in times of need. Blood is collected at 13 donor centers and on over 26 bloodmobiles throughout the Tampa Bay Area. FBS operates the Transfusion Service at 13 hospitals in the

Tampa Bay Area and performs approximately 100,000 cross matches per year to provide compatible blood for transfusion.

Northwest Florida Blood Center helps provide blood to 24 hospitals in Escambia, Holmes, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, and Bay counties in Florida, and Mobile, Baldwin, and Escambia counties in Alabama. NFBC has two centers in Pensacola, one in Ft. Walton and another in Panama City.

Both Florida Blood Services and Northwest Florida Blood Center are non-profit, community based blood centers, accredited by the AABB (American Association of Blood Banks), licensed by the Food and Drug Administration and affiliated with America's Blood Center and FABB (Florida Association of Blood Banks). Both centers support the thousands of volunteer donors in their communities who commit to save lives for their neighbors, friends and families in local hospitals.

Northwest Florida Blood Center will retain its name and both centers will continue to maintain their strong commitment as community blood centers while pooling both regional and national resources.

For more information about NFBC, please contact Betty Roberts at (850) 572-4136, or visit www.nfcblood.org.

For more information about this merger, please contact J.B. Gaskins, FBS Vice President at (727) 656-8441. For more information about Florida Blood Services, visit www.fbsblood.org.

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