• Severe winter weather throughout much of the United States has caused the cancellation of more than 14,000 blood and platelet donations since January 1.

• **There is a critical need for donors now.** In fact, someone is counting on you at this very moment.

• All blood types are needed, but type O negative donors can make the difference between an adequate blood supply and a shortage.

• The need for blood is constant. Approximately every two seconds a patient in the United States needs a blood transfusion.

• Blood is perishable and has no substitute. Red blood cells have a shelf life of only 42 days and platelets just 5 days – they must be replenished constantly.

• The Red Cross urges all eligible donors in unaffected areas to make an appointment to give blood or platelets in the coming days, and those in affected areas to donate as soon as travel is deemed safe, by calling **1-800-RED CROSS** (1-800-733-2767) or visiting [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org). 01/24/11