



UMB News

UMB and UMMC Blood Drive Sees Positive Turnout

March 30, 2020 | By [Jena Frick](#)

On March 25, Diana MacFarlane waited patiently in the lobby of the SMC Campus Center at the [University of Maryland, Baltimore](#) (UMB). She was waiting to be called to donate blood for the [University of Maryland Medical Center's](#)  (UMMC) March blood drive.

"It feels really good to donate," she said. "I feel like I'm helping my hospital and I'm helping the other hospitals in Maryland."



While hospitals across the nation are experiencing an unprecedented shortage of blood because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people willing to donate here is not in short supply.

MacFarlane, who is a laboratory liaison at UMMC, donates to the hospital's monthly blood drives every three months, but this particular drive was different from the rest. She was seated 6 feet apart from the rest of the donors in the waiting area; all of the donors were given medical masks to wear over their noses and mouths; and prior to entering the campus center, MacFarlane had to have her temperature taken.

[The American Red Cross](#)  has implemented these additional precautions at all of their blood drives due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Donating blood is an essential part of ensuring community health. Right now, the American Red Cross faces a severe blood shortage due to an

unprecedented number of blood drive cancellations during the [COVID-19](#)

[outbreak](#), which is why this three-day blood drive at UMB was more important than ever.

(View a [photo gallery](#).)

“Around this time, we really count on our high schools and colleges to host regular blood drives,” said Tammy, a charge nurse for the American Red Cross. “A lot of those have been shut down because of COVID-19. There’s also been a lot of fear about spreading the virus, so we have had a lot of blood drives canceled.”

Blood drive organizers were worried that this fear would deter people from donating, but it actually sparked more interest from the community.

“I was really happy to see that UMMC was organizing this drive with UMB, especially during this difficult but really important time,” said Kathryn Lee, a blood donor who came to the drive Wednesday. “There are certain situations that call on us as a community to step up, and this is one of them. We all have to do our part to help.”

(View a video below.)

UMMC normally hosts its monthly blood drives in the hospital, but since the outbreak of COVID-19 there are restrictions on visitors and non-essential personnel entering the hospital. That’s why UMMC decided to collaborate with UMB and set up the three-day drive in the main lobby of the University’s campus center, which is not being used because of the outbreak.

To maintain social distancing, blood drive organizers did not allow any walk-ins. Instead, all donors were required to make an appointment before attending the drive, and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

“We had 82 appointment slots for each day,” said Anne Williams, RN, the director of community health improvement at the [University of Maryland Medical System](#) (UMMS), which provides primary and specialty care in more than 150 locations and at 13 hospitals, including UMMC. “All of those slots completely filled up in less than 48 hours and we even have a waitlist.”

According to organizers, the three-day drive collected a total of 242 donated units of blood. Each donation can save three lives, so the blood collected during this drive could potentially save about 726 lives at hospitals around Maryland.

“We’re really excited because when we announced this blood drive, we really weren’t sure what the response would be, but the community has been wonderful,” Williams said.

Due to the continued shortage of blood and high number of interested donors, UMMC and UMB plan to host a blood drive at the campus center every Tuesday in April during the COVID-19 pandemic. On April 7, the drive will be opened from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and for the rest of the month, it will be opened from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

“This is not just one and done. We will continue to make sure that blood donations happen for UMMS,” said **David Marcozzi, MD, MHS-CL, FACEP**, associate professor of emergency medicine at the [University of Maryland School of Medicine](#) and incident commander at UMMS. “There’s a lot of people who still need blood during this pandemic and it’s our job to make sure we maintain the supply, so those folks get the blood that they need.”

Donated blood is a lifesaving, essential part of caring for patients, and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) encourages people who are well to continue to donate blood if they are able. MacFarlane and Lee plan to come back and donate again.

“I’m really grateful for everyone who’s going to work and taking on risk in order to help others at this time,” Lee said. “Continuing to donate blood is something small that I can do to help others, too.”

Anyone interested in becoming a donor should visit the [American Red Cross blood donation website](#) to schedule an appointment.

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