



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **SunCoast Blood Centers Seeks Recovered COVID-19 Patients for Convalescent Plasma**

**Bradenton, FL** – SunCoast Blood Centers, the local nonprofit organization that serves hospitals in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and Desoto counties will soon begin collecting plasma from people who have recovered from the coronavirus so it can be transfused to people with life-threatening coronavirus infection. SunCoast Blood Centers is working with the FDA and local health organizations to coordinate the collection and use of COVID-19 convalescent plasma.

According to the FDA, people can also potentially donate if they exhibited symptoms but did not get tested. SunCoast will run a serological test on plasma donors, which if it determines they had the virus, will enable them to donate.

Convalescent plasma has proven successful in treating other viral infections. Individuals who recover from coronavirus have developed antibodies to the virus that remain in the plasma portion of their blood. Transfusing the plasma that contains the antibodies into a person still fighting the virus can provide a boost to the patient's immune system and potentially help them recover. It is hoped that this investigational treatment will aid the recovery of the most critically ill patients.

As the only locally operated nonprofit blood center in the community, SunCoast has the technology necessary to be able to collect, test and process plasma from donors and provide to community hospitals if requested. Potential donor must schedule an appointment at **866-972-5663** or email **[covid19@suncoastblood.org](mailto:covid19@suncoastblood.org)**.

Potential donors need to meet all the usual screening criteria for blood donation, plus pass additional FDA criteria,

including:

- ◆ **Have a prior diagnosis of COVID-19 documented by a laboratory test or be tested if symptoms were exhibited but no diagnosis made**
- ◆ **Complete resolution of symptoms at least 28 days prior to donation**
- ◆ **Must test negative for HLA antibodies (female donors only)**
- ◆ **Be 16 years or older with parental permission**

**About SunCoast Blood Centers** - A registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, SunCoast Blood Centers has provided a reliable supply of safe blood products and services for our community since 1949. SunCoast is the exclusive supplier of blood products and services for Sarasota Memorial Healthcare System, Doctors Hospital of Sarasota, Manatee Memorial Hospital, Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, Complex Care Hospital of Ridgelake, Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Sarasota, North Port Emergency Room, Fawcett Memorial Hospital of Port Charlotte, Englewood Community Hospital and DeSoto Memorial Hospital. SunCoast also partners with Moffitt Cancer Center to provide blood products including pathogen reduced platelets. Recognized for its outstanding service, the Sarasota Chamber of Commerce honored SunCoast as the 2017 Non-profit of the Year. SunCoast participates in cancer treatment programs, research and provides therapeutic services at the hospitals it serves. For donor locations and more information, visit [www.suncoastblood.org](http://www.suncoastblood.org) or call 1-866-97-BLOOD.

### **SunCoast Blood Centers Locations**

#### **Lakewood Ranch**

**Donor Center and Administrative Offices**  
3025 Lakewood Ranch Boulevard Unit 111  
Bradenton, Florida 34211

#### **Sarasota**

1760 Mound Street  
Sarasota, Florida 34236

#### **Bradenton**

Bayshore Shopping Center  
6026 14th Street W.  
Bradenton, FL 34207

#### **Venice**

Bird Bay Plaza  
539 US Hwy 41 Bypass  
North Venice, FL 34285