



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HIDDEN DIABETES REVEALED BY BLOOD BANK SCREENING

WILMINGTON, DE – Don Lewis of Wilmington, DE donated blood on December 15, 2007 just as he had done for years. But this time he was offered free diabetes screening with his blood donation. Blood Bank of Delmarva had recently become the first blood collection program in the country to begin testing for signs the disease. Don agreed to be screened even though he didn't think he was at risk.

"Boy was I wrong! Blood Bank staff called me at home the next day and told me my blood glucose level was 530, which falls in the critical range," Don said. "To have my level that high is scary. Diabetes does not run in my family, and I had no recognizable symptoms."

Don immediately went to his doctor for blood work and was diagnosed as a Type II diabetic. Since his diagnosis, he has changed his diet drastically and takes medication to control the disease.

"I feel lucky that the Blood Bank was able to catch the diabetes before it caused any other serious health problems," Don said. "I was the blood donor who helped save lives, but ironically, the Blood Bank may have saved mine."

To make an appointment to give blood and get screened for diabetes, call 1 888 8-BLOOD-8 or visit www.delmarvablood.org.

About Blood Bank of Delmarva

Blood Bank of Delmarva is a non-profit, community service program that provides blood for the 17 hospitals throughout Delmarva. More than 80,000 blood donations are needed each year for 20,000 patients across the Delmarva Peninsula. For more information about the Blood Bank or to request an appointment to donate blood, call 1-888-8-BLOOD-8 or visit www.delmarvablood.org.

*Blood Bank of Delmarva * 100 Hygeia Drive * Newark, DE 19713
1 888 8-BLOOD-8 * www.delmarvablood.org*



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**375 POTENTIAL DIABETICS IDENTIFIED BY BLOOD BANK'S
SCREENING PROGRAM IN FIRST YEAR**

Donors urged to see personal physician

NEWARK, DE – In the first year of Blood Bank of Delmarva's new diabetes screening program, 375 blood donors received important information about their health after they gave blood: **they had glucose levels of more than 200**. Donors with that result have been urged to contact their physicians for further testing. Of those with elevated glucose levels, 18 blood donors had dangerous levels greater than 400 and four donors were in the critical range above 500. The highest glucose result to date was 598.

“Our glucose testing program is identifying potential diabetics at a rate of more than one per day,” said Robert L. Travis, Blood Bank of Delmarva President and CEO. “It has been successful at raising awareness about diabetes and reaching people who are not yet aware they have the disease. We are now conducting a following-up study to see how many donors who had elevated glucose levels have consulted their physicians and how many were diagnosed as diabetic.”

Blood Bank of Delmarva began offering blood donors the opportunity to be screened for diabetes in October 2007. It became the first blood banking organization in the country to launch this type of program. The non-fasting blood glucose test is voluntary and offered to donors at no charge. During the first year, 50,647 blood donors were screened, helping identify many people on the Delmarva Peninsula who did not know they have or are at risk for developing diabetes.

Robert L. Travis, president and CEO of Blood Bank of Delmarva, conceived the idea for a screening program after hearing a presentation about the diabetes epidemic. Travis formed a committee of experts from Christiana Care Health System, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware, the American Diabetes Association (ADA), and the Delaware Division of Public Health to help advance the project. The diabetes program is being funded by the Blood Bank and will cost approximately \$200,000 for the first two years. That includes equipment, training and ongoing screening costs.

It is expected that results from the BBD diabetes screening program will provide the largest pool of data available from one geographic region.

How it works

The Blood Bank currently conducts 11 tests on every pint of blood as part of its regular testing protocol. This twelfth test — for glucose level — takes place at the same time and at no cost to the donor. Each donor screened is given a confidential online password to enter on the Blood Bank's web site to access their results. Donors with glucose levels above 200 who do not retrieve their result within one week are called by a trained Blood Bank representative. Those with results above 400 are called immediately. During the program's first year, about 60% of the blood donors opted to be screened.

Diabetes Statistics and Information from the American Diabetes Association

Diabetes has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), more than 20.8 million children and adults in the United States (7% of the population) have diabetes and approximately 6.2 million people are unaware that they have the disease. ADA researchers say about 8% of the population on Delmarva has diabetes, and about one-third do not know it.

In the U.S., the death rate for diabetes is on a dramatic rise, increasing 45% since 1987. It continues to go up while fatalities for other diseases such as heart attack, stroke and cancer decline. Diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death by disease, with more than 400,000 Americans dying from its complications each year. Those can include problems related to the heart, kidneys, eyes, feet, nerves, teeth, and gums. If detected early, diabetes is treatable.

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