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MILLER-KEYSTONE
BLOOD CENTER

1465 Valley Center Parkway, Bethlehem, PA 18017

Administrative Fax 610-691-5423

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GIVEaPINT.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rami Nemeh, Chief Operating Officer
Miller-Keystone Blood Center
610-419.5290 || rnemeh@giveapint.org

Lina Barbieri, CFRE, Chief Philanthropy Officer
Miller-Keystone Blood Center
610-691-5850 ext. 1275 || lbarbieri@giveapint.org

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY AWARDS MILLER-KEYSTONE BLOOD CENTER WITH GRANT FOR NEW BLOODMOBILE

LEHIGH VALLEY, PA – Officials from Miller-Keystone Blood Center (MKBC) and the County of Northampton proudly announce the awarding of a \$250,000 grant designated for the purchase of a new community bloodmobile vehicle. The grant presentation took place during a press conference at the Northampton County Court of Common Pleas, located at 669 Washington Street in Easton.

According to Northampton County Executive Lamont McClure, this new partnership between the county and MKBC “has been developed to help address an ongoing blood shortage by increasing donations via blood drives, which have been shown to play a critical role in reaching potential donors.”

Miller-Keystone Blood Center maintains a list of nearly 1,900 community partners that run blood drives throughout the year, with about 283 active donor groups in Northampton County alone. These businesses, churches, and schools play a vital role in providing education and enabling access for those who wish to roll up their sleeves and give the gift of life. During the pandemic, with schools and businesses closed and people staying home, the Blood Center witnessed a severe decline in blood donations through mobile drives. However, moving into the post-pandemic era, there is a shift back to a “mobile-drive culture.”

Rami Nemeh, MKBC’s Chief Operating Officer explained that the Blood Center provides more than 100,000 transfusable blood products to our regional hospitals annually, with 37% of the community

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blood supply collected at mobile blood drive locations, moving toward a full 40% as we return to pre-pandemic blood drive levels.

“These blood drives take place 7 days per week, 365 days per year at schools, churches, businesses and other organizations throughout our community,” he said, noting that upon its arrival, the new bloodmobile will be added to the MKBC bloodmobile fleet allowing the retirement of at least one of the vehicles which has exceeded its life expectancy.

Nemeh added that “every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood, and one in seven people entering the hospital will require a blood transfusion. This poses an enormous challenge for community blood centers as we are faced with the ongoing, critical task of recruiting new and additional blood donors, and ensuring that a safe and constant supply of blood products is available for cancer patients, accident victims, premature infants and others in need of lifesaving transfusions at our regional hospitals.”

Mr. Nemeh noted that an additional concern is a generational gap in the mindset of today’s blood donors. In recent years, blood donations in the US from individuals aged 16-18 have decreased by 60%, and those from individuals aged 19-24 have decreased by 32%.

“Nationally, nearly 60% of blood donations come from individuals over the age of 40, and almost 45% are from those aged over 50,” he explained. “Locally, the numbers are even more alarming, as 86% of MKBC’s donor population is over the age of 55. These statistics are concerning, as blood donations from younger generations are pivotal for the stability and diversification of the blood supply.”

“While blood collection from individuals is the primary function and mission of Miller-Keystone Blood Center and is the cornerstone of its reputation, it is the generous financial support of

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individuals and organizations in our community that allows our facility to function optimally,” added Lina Barbieri, Chief Philanthropy Officer, MKBC.

“We are sincerely grateful to the Honorable Lamont McClure, County Council and the residents of the County of Northampton for their partnership and generosity,” said Ms. Barbieri. “This grant in support of a new community bloodmobile demonstrates their commitment not only to Miller-Keystone Blood Center, but to the health and welfare of our entire community.”

The new bloodmobile vehicle is expected to be placed in-service in the Lehigh Valley in mid to late 2025.

For more information on the grant presentation or new community bloodmobile, contact Lina Barbieri, Chief Philanthropy Officer, at lbarbieri@giveapint.org; or for more information on hosting a blood drive at your location, call 800.223.6667 and ask to speak with someone in Donor Relations.

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