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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

**Date: September 9, 2026**

Monika Kotlarska-Gross, Director of Donor Relations
Miller-Keystone Blood Center
610-691-5850, ext. 1227 | mkotlarska-gross@giveapint.org

# DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN ANNOUNCES THIRD ANNUAL DIOCESE-WIDE BLOOD DRIVE

LEHIGH VALLEY, PA - **Miller-Keystone Blood Center (MKBC)** and the **Diocese of Allentown** have announced that **the 2026 Diocese-wide blood drive will take place beginning on September 19, and continuing through Dec. 16,** at all MKBC fixed-site locations.

The launch date of this third annual campaign coincides with the September 19 Feast Day of Saint Januarius, Patron Saint of Blood Banks, and offers parishioners throughout the Diocese a meaningful opportunity to put their faith into action through the lifesaving gift of blood donation.

"Blood cannot be manufactured or replaced," Bishop Schlert said. "It can only come from individuals willing to give of themselves for others."

MEDIA ADVISORY / PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

**What:** **Allentown Diocese Blood Drive Launch / Blessing of Medallions, Prayer Cards, Magnets by The Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert, Bishop of the Diocese of Allentown**
**When:** **Wednesday, September 16, 11:00 AM**
**Where:** **Miller-Keystone Blood Center, 1465 Valley Center Parkway, Bethlehem**

Over the past two years, parishioners across the Diocese of Allentown have generously responded. In 2025, the campaign collected 821 units of blood, a 40% increase over 2024, with 63 parishes and schools throughout the Diocese participating.

According to MKBC's Monika Kotlarska-Gross, Director of Donor Relations, this year's campaign comes at a critical time.

"The United States is in the midst of the most critical blood shortage in our nation's history," Kotlarska-Gross said. "Many blood centers across the country, including Miller-Keystone Blood Center, are operating with only a one-to-two-day inventory of blood."

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"We need to collect approximately 350 blood donations every day to care for individuals undergoing cancer treatments, accident victims, surgical patients, premature babies, and others in need of lifesaving transfusions at our regional hospitals," she noted.

Blood donors who provide their parish's Blood Drive Sponsor Code at the time of their appointment will receive a Saint Januarius medallion blessed by The Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert, Bishop of the Diocese of Allentown. Prayer cards or magnets will also be available for donors who previously received a medallion or who would prefer a prayer card or magnet instead.

Beginning Saturday, September 19, blood or platelet donations may be made at the following MKBC locations:

- Allentown: 1255 S. Cedar Crest Blvd., Suite 1300
- Allentown: Five City Center, 740 Hamilton St., Suite 120
- Bethlehem: 1465 Valley Center Parkway
- Easton: 3765 Nicholas St., Suite B
- Pittston: 400 Route 315, Suite E
- Reading: 2745 Leiscz's Bridge Road (for GPS, use 1047 Old Bernville Road)

While some MKBC fixed site locations fall outside the geographic boundaries of the Diocese of Allentown, donors within the Diocese are encouraged to invite friends and family to participate using their respective parish's Blood Drive Sponsor Code.

"Blood is perishable, and there is no substitute," Kotlarska-Gross said. "The only source is the volunteer blood donor. Miller-Keystone Blood Center is grateful to the Diocese of Allentown for its ongoing support of our critically important mission, and we are proud to partner with them again this year to save lives in our community."

To donate blood, individuals must be at least 16 years old, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds, and be feeling healthy. Parental consent is required for 16-year-old donors. A complete list of eligibility guidelines is available at GIVEaPINT.org.

Appointments can be made by calling 800-B-A-DONOR (223-6667), ext. 2, online at GIVEaPINT.org, through the MKBC App (available from Google Play and the Apple App Store), or by scanning the QR code.

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