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**MILLER-KEYSTONE**  
BLOOD CENTER

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Administrative Fax 610-691-5423

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Lina Barbieri, Chief Philanthropy Officer and  
Vice President of Communications  
Miller-Keystone Blood Center  
610-691-5850, ext. 1275 | [lbarbieri@giveapint.org](mailto:lbarbieri@giveapint.org)

**Date: October 1, 2026**

Hope Dorn, Vice President of Operational Services  
Miller-Keystone Blood Center  
610-691-5850, ext. 1242 | [hdorn@giveapint.org](mailto:hdorn@giveapint.org)

## **LEHIGHTON AMBULANCE LAUNCHES CARBON COUNTY'S FIRST PREHOSPITAL BLOOD PROGRAM**

***New partnership with Miller-Keystone Blood Center brings lifesaving blood products directly to patients before they reach the hospital***

LEHIGHTON, PA – Effective October 1, 2026, **Lehighon Ambulance Association** has become **the first EMS agency based in Carbon County to implement a prehospital blood program**, bringing lifesaving blood products directly to patients before they reach the hospital.

“Lehighon Ambulance Association is committed to advancing the level of care available to our communities before patients ever reach the hospital. By bringing blood products into the prehospital environment, we are giving our paramedics another critical tool to treat life-threatening blood loss from both traumatic injury and serious medical emergencies,” said Matt Derkosh, Operations Manager of Lehighon Ambulance Association. “For a large, predominantly rural service area, this program represents an important step forward in delivering advanced, time-sensitive care closer to the patient and improving the opportunity for better outcomes.”

Lehighon Ambulance will provide the service throughout Carbon County and the surrounding region in partnership with Miller-Keystone Blood Center (MKBC), headquartered in Bethlehem. Established in 1971, Miller-Keystone currently provides blood products and services to more than 30 hospitals across 22 counties in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and supports prehospital blood programs operated by the City of Allentown and City of Bethlehem EMS services.

“Carrying blood on ambulances and giving EMS personnel the ability to treat severe blood loss before a patient reaches the hospital is a game changer,” said Hope Dorn, Vice President of Operational Services for Miller-Keystone Blood Center. “That time matters, especially for patients in more rural areas. There is no question that the implementation of this program has the potential to save lives in Carbon County and the surrounding region.”

Dorn explained that before an EMS service can implement a prehospital blood program, participating personnel must complete program-specific training and designated vehicles must be equipped to maintain

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blood products within required storage temperature ranges. MKBC and Lehigh Valley Ambulance will coordinate the supply, handling and use of blood products under the program's approved procedures and medical protocols.

Blood carried on Lehigh Valley Ambulance vehicles will be **low-titer group O, Rh-positive whole blood**. Unlike a unit of red blood cells, whole blood contains red cells, plasma and platelets together. The plasma in these units is tested to confirm low levels of antibodies against A and B blood types.

"Carrying low-titer group O whole blood gives EMS personnel a way to begin transfusion to a patient when there may not be time to determine their blood type," Dorn said. "It provides several blood components in one product, with use guided by the program's medical protocols and patient eligibility criteria."

"Our Program will service over 450 square miles of primary coverage here in Carbon County, which translates to about 75,000 residents and visitors. Lehigh Valley Ambulance will also service surrounding areas when requested for a "blood response" by our EMS partners as part of a regional effort to put this lifesaving treatment in the toolbox of as many prehospital providers as possible," said Derkosh.

"The United States is currently experiencing a critical blood shortage, making the support of local blood donors more important than ever," added Derkosh. "In addition to the community blood drives Miller-Keystone already hosts throughout the region, Lehigh Valley Ambulance will be hosting blood drives to help support not only its new prehospital blood program, but the blood supply available to patients throughout our community."

Dorn noted that Miller-Keystone Blood Center operates six regional donor centers, including a Pittston, PA site that is open three days per week for the convenience of blood donors in the area. MKBC also operates eleven satellite locations throughout its service area, including the following in Northeastern Pennsylvania:

- **Brodheadsville:** Western Pocono Community Ambulance, 131 Pilgrim Way – 2 days each month
- **Lehigh Valley:** Bethany Wesleyan Church, 1122 Fairyland Road – 1 day per month
- **Nesquehoning:** Nesquehoning Fire Company, 953 East Catawissa Street – 1 day, every-other month
- **Palmerton:** Palmerton Sokol Club, 452 Lehigh Avenue – 1 day, every-other month
- **Stroudsburg:** St. Luke's Hospital-Monroe, 100 St. Luke's Lane - 1 day per month

Individuals interested in supporting the program and the regional blood supply are encouraged to donate with Miller-Keystone Blood Center. To find a donor center or upcoming community blood drive, visit **GiveAPint.org**. For information on hosting a blood drive, call **610-691-5850, ext. 1218**.

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