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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Blood Connection Launches Major Community Outreach Effort to Secure Badly
Needed Convalescent Plasma Donations to Treat COVID-19 Patients**

***“Turn Positive into a Positive” campaign teams local leaders with COVID survivors to educate
the public on effectiveness, need, and ease of donation***

Greenville S.C. (October 19, 2020) – The Blood Connection (TBC) is partnering with area leaders to launch an aggressive community outreach to secure critically needed convalescent plasma donations to treat COVID-19 patients. The “Turn Positive into a Positive” campaign will leverage medical experts, political figures, business leaders and sports figures, as well as area residents who attribute their recovery from the virus to the treatment.

The plasma of those who have recovered from COVID-19 may contain antibodies that help fight the disease. Collecting this plasma from survivors and transfusing it into patients who are experiencing respiratory distress can boost the recipient's immune system and spur it on to generate more of its own antibodies to fight the disease. Donating is as easy as donating blood, and donors can give plasma as often as once every 14 days.

“COVID-19 can progress very quickly, outpacing some patients' immune systems' ability to fight it off, so hospitals are using convalescent plasma as a front-line therapy to give those experiencing respiratory distress a jump start,” says Dr. Robert Rainer, medical director for The Blood Connection. “The effect of this treatment in some COVID patients is quite impressive, and convalescent plasma has saved the lives of many people throughout the country.”

Currently, convalescent plasma, along with Remdesivir and steroids, is among the most effective treatments available for more extreme cases of COVID-19. At this time, The Blood Connection is focused on keeping pace with current demand and building an inventory for future use, making the need for donations even more pressing.

Thanks to a recent Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act grant to address this pressing need, TBC has outfitted all of its collection facilities and mobile donation vehicles with the equipment needed to accept convalescent plasma donations and funded the outreach campaign. Throughout the next several weeks, TBC will launch advertisements, conduct social media and media outreach, and host a series of events designed to double the number of donations each week. TBC has partnered with medical experts at Piedmont Health Foundation, PRISMA Health and Bon Secours St. Francis Health System to raise awareness of the effectiveness of this treatment and the need for donations. TBC has also engaged community leaders, including political figures, business leaders, local universities and sports teams to encourage donor participation.



The campaign will include advertising, social media outreach and media relations activities, including several events and donation locations to be announced shortly.

“The bad news is that there is an urgent need to keep plasma on the shelves to help save lives here in the Upstate,” said Delisa English, president and CEO, The Blood Connection. “The good news is that this gives many of us an easy opportunity to take back a portion of our power over an illness that has left many of us feeling helpless. We really hope that everyone who’s beaten this disease will donate to turn their positive test result into a positive outcome for those who might otherwise be lost to the pandemic.”

In addition to plasma donations, TBC always welcomes and needs normal blood donations.

For more information on convalescent plasma or blood donations and how you can help, as well as updates on the campaign and area events, please visit www.positive2positive.com or follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheBloodConnection>, Twitter: <https://twitter.com/bloodconnection>, or Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/thebloodconnection/>.

About The Blood Connection

Founded in Greenville, SC, The Blood Connection (TBC) has been committed to saving lives since 1962. TBC is an independently managed, not-for-profit, community blood center that provides blood products to more than 80 hospitals within South Carolina, North Carolina and Northeast Georgia. Recognized by the U.S. Congress for its dedication to disaster preparedness and the community, TBC works diligently to collect blood from volunteer donors to meet the ever-increasing demand. By keeping collections local, TBC serves hundreds of thousands of patients a year in its communities. TBC is licensed and regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. For more information, please visit www.thebloodconnection.org.

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