Established in 1975 and located in Houston, Texas, Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center has become a leading supplier of blood, blood components and related services to clients not only in the Texas Gulf Coast region, but worldwide. We offer an extensive range of products and services to fulfill a variety of client needs.
About Us

Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center began operations on Jan. 1, 1975. Serving the largest medical campus in the world, The Blood Center has grown to more than 650 employees and serves more than 170 hospitals and health care institutions in the 26-county Texas Gulf Coast, Brazos Valley and East Texas regions.

Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization and is accredited, licensed and inspected by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and AABB, an international, not-for-profit association representing individuals and institutions involved in the field of transfusion medicine and cellular therapies, as well as local and state authorities. The Blood Center is a proud member of AABB, Blood Centers of America, South Central Association of Blood Banks, the Texas Medical Center and America’s Blood Centers.

Our Service Philosophy

Our two priority objectives are:

- To maximize the utilization of every component produced
- To maximize the availability of every component produced

The first objective can only be achieved if the number and the variety of components in our inventory system match the number and the variety of components required by the patients we serve.

The second objective can only be achieved if we ensure that the proper quantities of the proper components are in the proper places when required, to satisfy all reasonable requests.

All team members at The Blood Center share responsibility for meeting our primary objectives. Our Hospital Services department guides the organization’s activities toward meeting these goals and providing products in response to patient needs.

- Blood and blood components are a resource of the service area and must be available to all hospitals served by The Blood Center based on priority of need.
- The Blood Center must have the authority to redistribute blood and blood components entrusted to it to best meet the needs of our service area.
- The Blood Center and the hospitals served cooperatively determine optimal inventory levels based on reasonable need.
- The hospitals served are responsible for maintaining the blood inventory assigned to them within prescribed quality control guidelines.
- The Blood Center maintains inventory control records to facilitate the movement of the blood and blood components. Each hospital served is responsible for providing, upon request, accurate information on that part of the blood inventory assigned to them and for properly completing and maintaining records as appropriate.
Blood Products and Services

We supply a full range of transfusable products, including special order components.

- Red Blood Cells (Deglycerolized, Washed, Frozen, Leukocyte-reduced)
- Platelets (Pooled and Apheresis – Leukocyte-Reduced)
- Plasma (Apheresis, Cryoprecipitate-reduced, Fresh Frozen, Frozen within 24 hours, Liquid)
- Whole Blood (Leukocyte-reduced and Non-leukocyte-reduced)
- Cryoprecipitate AHF (Single and Pooled)

Additionally we provide modified components and component services to meet specialized needs. These include:

- Additive volume reduction
- Aliquot preparation
- CMV-negative components
- Irradiation
- Pedi-packs
- Platelet volume reduction (special request item)

We participate in the AABB’s National Blood Exchange program, which allows blood centers to share their inventories to assist each other in times of short supply. This ensures that donated blood can be available where it is needed, affording the most effective usage of the available blood supply.

Quality assured: We distribute 75 percent of our inventory within 28 days of its collection – ensuring fresh blood products always are available.

We are committed to helping patients; therefore we are committed to delivering the best service to our hospital partners. We can provide logistical support, saving you time, resources and expenses. Depending on the service package you select, you may benefit from some or all of the following services:

- Online ordering
- Product deliveries, including STAT and ASAP deliveries
- Unpacking and stocking of products
- Inventory management
- Full-credit return privileges on select units
  *For full-service customers only*
- Specimen pickups
- Consignments
- Usage reporting
Additonal Services

Autologous and Directed Donations

Patients scheduled for surgery may donate blood for themselves (autologous donations), and physicians may direct us to collect blood from pre-selected donors (directed donations). Autologous and directed donations may be made at our Neighborhood Donor Centers.

All autologous and directed donations require a physician’s order. The completed Request for Autologous/Directed Donations form (GC2417) should be faxed to The Blood Center’s Donor Services Department at (713) 790-1782. Once the unit has been drawn, it takes approximately 72 hours to be ready for delivery to the hospital. To track a unit already donated, contact Donor Services at (713) 791-6608.

The charges associated with this program vary by blood component. Please refer to our current Fee Schedule for the prices. Units accepted by your hospital from collection sources out of region are not returnable for credit. Medical Director approval is required to freeze autologous red blood cells.

Therapeutic Phlebotomy
The Blood Center provides therapeutic phlebotomy. The patient’s physician must complete a Request for Therapeutic Phlebotomy Form (GC2400), including the amount of blood to be withdrawn and the minimum hematocrit level. The Blood Center’s Chief Medical Officer or Medical Director must approve all therapeutic phlebotomy requests prior to the first phlebotomy. These procedures may be performed at our Neighborhood Donor Centers on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Educational Services
The Blood Center provides educational programs to help blood banking and transfusion medicine professionals stay abreast of the ongoing changes in the medical, technical, administrative and regulatory areas.

The electronic version of the Gulf Coast Regional Immunohematology Proficiency Survey, eGRIPS, is available at no charge to full-service facilities served by The Blood Center. Modules cover a broad range of blood banking topics that include basic antibodies, advanced antibody problems, ABO discrepancies, Rh problems, warm autoantibodies and plasma components, as well as a module on how to manage emergency issues in the transfusion service. Details are available at http://www.giveblood.org/education/e-grips-online-modules/
Placing Blood Orders

Ordering by Phone
Orders for most transfusable blood components are to be placed via our 24-hour line, (713) 791-6250. (See the list of contact numbers on page 8 for alternate emergency numbers.) Requests for transfusable components requiring special handling should also be placed using this line, but may be transferred to another area of The Blood Center specifically designated to handle these orders. Orders relating to washed or antigen-negative red blood cells should be directed to our Consultation and Reference Lab at (713) 791-6286.

To ensure the best service, callers should clearly identify themselves and the hospital they represent, then specify the number of units required of each particular blood group and Rh factor, the blood components being requested and the nature of their request. For example: “This is John Doe at Oakridge Hospital. I’d like to order six O-positive Leuko-Reduced Red Blood Cells for stock.” The person placing the order should receive feedback from our staff to ensure the order was recorded properly. If this feedback is not automatically given, it should be requested.

Online Ordering
For your added convenience, blood and blood component orders may be placed through our online ordering system. Utilizing the online system also allows hospitals to track the status of their orders. The system also has reporting capability that allows your hospitals to monitor ordering patterns and total number of units shipped.

To access the system, visit our website at giveblood.org, and scroll down to the Hospital Ordering System link. Enter your username and password, and follow the instructions below.

For product ordering:
1. From the main menu click on “Place a new order.”
2. In the component grid, enter the quantity and blood type of desired product.
3. Submit order.
4. Review and confirm order.

For product returns:
1. From the main menu click on “Returns”.
2. Manually enter or scan the unit number and product code.
3. Product can also be searched for by clicking browse inventory and selecting search criteria.
4. Add desired products to return grid and print packing slip.
5. Keep packing slip handy for Hospital Services representative.

For checking order status:
1. Click on the “Check order status” tab to display the status of the last 10 orders placed (by phone or online).
2. Click on the order date to display order details.

For questions regarding the online ordering system, please contact Lisa Torres at (713) 791-6268 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
Response Time

Response time is the interval between the order placement and the delivery of components. If the component is routinely stored by The Blood Center, a delivery can be completed more quickly than if the component is available only through special request. As deliveries are normally prioritized based on need, response time is also affected by the other requests being made on the blood supply by the hospitals served.

Our goal is to deliver blood products in as timely a manner as possible. Events like weather or traffic may cause delays, but we have taken steps to reduce the potential impact of these factors. The routine production and storage of large numbers of Leukocyte-Reduced Red Blood Cells, Platelet Concentrates, Fresh Frozen Single Donor Plasma and Cryoprecipitated Antihemophilic Factor make these components readily available at almost all times. Additionally, the maintenance of adequate levels of blood inventory in each hospital served helps keep emergency needs to a minimum.

When delivery time is critical, hospital personnel should ask if there is any unusual circumstance that might delay delivery beyond normal travel time. Additionally, if we detect any unforeseen complications, our staff should provide appropriate notification to the hospital.

Product Delivery Types

**STAT Request:** A situation for which any unnecessary delay in the provision services will be, in the opinion of a physician, truly life-endangering to the patient. STAT deliveries (20 units or fewer of the same product) of off-the-shelf products will be consigned and shipped within 10 minutes of receipt of order. Modified units will be shipped STAT out of lab.

For each additional 20 units requested on the STAT order, please allow an additional 10 minutes. Please keep in mind the delivery time can be affected by traffic and weather conditions.

**ASAP Request:** Any other time-sensitive delivery of a product. All ASAP delivery times should be an agreed-upon time between the blood bank/hospital tech and The Blood Center.

**Stock:** Any order meant to bring a hospital’s inventory level to maximum levels. Stock order requests could be affected by availability. Stock order deliveries within 55 miles of The Blood Center should be completed within six to eight hours.

**Trade:** The replacing of a short-dated unit with a fresher unit.
Monthly Billing

The Blood Center invoices hospitals for the cost of the components provided, less the cost of those products the hospital returns for which credit is approved. The total charges associated with any particular component provided in a given month will be determined according to these criteria by the following formula:

\[(\text{Quantity provided} \times \text{cost of component}) - (\text{Quantity of allowable units returned for credit} \times \text{cost of component})\]

- Consignment Ticket and Hospital Report of Returned Blood and Blood Component forms prepared as a part of the delivery or return process are utilized as a basis for the monthly billing statements.
- Consignment Ticket forms are utilized whenever The Blood Center provides a component to one of the hospitals it serves for which a charge is intended.
- Hospital Report of Returned Blood and Blood Component forms are utilized whenever The Blood Center accepts a component from a hospital for which The Blood Center is allowed to give financial credit.

At the time a delivery or return transaction is completed, The Blood Center provides the hospital with a copy of the form used to record the transaction. These copies are intended to act as the hospital’s record that the transaction occurred. The original of each form serves as The Blood Center’s evidence of the transaction. Copies of each form utilized during a given month will be incorporated into that month’s billing statement to indicate the legitimacy of each debit or credit associated with a given product.

The technologist who signs for the delivery or return of components must check all entries for accuracy. If one hospital shares its inventory from The Blood Center with another hospital, an agreement must already be in place for The Blood Center to issue credit. The original hospital must complete and return a Hospital Report of Returned Blood and Blood Components form. Credit will not be issued until The Blood Center receives official evidence of the transfer.

For your convenience hospital billing statements are available online. Billing is also available through the online ordering system.

Cost-Management Offerings

- **Early payment processing:** Earn a 1 percent quarterly rebate by making payment by the 15th of the following month, for all months within a quarter.

- **Joint Recruitment Program:** Receive financial credit for hosting blood drives and achieving donation goals.

- **Usage consultation:** We can offer suggestions to help manage your inventory efficiently. Our physicians are available for consultation as well.
Service Numbers

**Blood Component Order Number:** (713) 791-6250
Call 24 hours a day to order components for transfusion routinely stocked by Hospital Services. (i.e. red cells, platelets, plasma, cryo, CMV-negative products and irradiated products).

**Hospital Services Emergency Phone Numbers:** (713) 791-9307 or (713) 791-9308
In the unusual event the Blood Component Order number is not answered within approximately 10 rings, utilize our emergency telephone numbers to place blood orders.

**Donor Services Department:** (713) 791-6608
For issues concerning Autologous and Directed donations, this line is answered Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Messages left on voicemail are answered 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Calls received after 11 p.m. are returned the following day after 7 a.m.

**Special Components:** (713) 791-6284
Call 24 hours a day for:
- Red blood cells negative for blood group antigens other than ABO/Rh
- Washed red blood cells (hospitals must provide the indication for washing)
- Frozen/deglycerolized red blood cells (coordinate processing and delivery for patients who require rare blood)

**Immunohematology Reference Laboratory:** (713) 791-6286
Call 24 hours a day for assistance in resolving serological problems encountered in pre-transfusion testing, i.e., ABO discrepancies, unexpected antibodies, etc.

**Business Office:** (713) 791-6383
Call Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. through 4 p.m., to discuss monthly billing statements or any other administrative function.

**Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center main switchboard:** (713) 790-1200
Our operator is available Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Key Personnel Contacts**
Medical Director: Dr. Beth Hartwell, (713) 791-6656
Director, Product Management: Marc Lewis, (713) 791-6673
Director, Technical Services: Cheri Jennings, (713) 791-6316
Director, Client Services: Steve Ruth, (713) 791-6202
Operations Manager, Hospital Services: Mike Duke, (713) 791-6214
Manager, Component Production: Ronda Ferguson, (713) 791-6344

Helping patients like Alicia
When Alicia was only 4 years old, she was involved in a serious accident that nearly claimed her life. The major trauma resulted in significant blood loss, but she miraculously pulled through. Alicia was honored to share her gratitude for the donors who saved her life in a *Commit for Life* awareness ad in 2014.