



To: Carter BloodCare Customers

From: Frances Compton, M.D.
Medical Director of Patient Services

Date: October 28, 2022

Re: Critical Local and Nationwide Blood Bag/Filter Shortage

Background

Since March of this year, Carter BloodCare, along with many other independent community blood centers, has been operating with limited blood bag inventories. While we have managed to minimize any impact on blood collections, the mitigation strategies that were previously effective may no longer be possible.

We are in daily communications with the blood bag manufacturers, and unfortunately, we are not confident that the blood bag shortage will be resolved before year end. Most recently, there is a critical shortage of the inline leukoreduction filtration kits used in the collection of double red cells. We have done an exhaustive search, and all other filtration kits that could be used for this purpose are also unavailable. Additionally, all 42-day red cell bags are in short supply, and our only option may be to distribute 35-day red cells.

Therefore, due to circumstances outside of our control, we may be distributing non-leukoreduced red blood cells and/or 35-day red blood cells. We are also working to obtain bedside leukoreduction filters for our clients' use, based on availability.

Please know that these are temporary solutions to help maintain a stable blood supply as we move closer to the holiday season. We are working hard to prevent this critical supply chain issue from impacting our community hospitals and the patients which we all serve. Unfortunately, we are not the only blood center affected by this blood bag shortage; it is a national problem. Most other blood centers are facing this same challenge which limits our ability to resource share. Considering this, we are requesting you to prepare for the following potential significant changes:

Impact to Hospital Customers and Patients

- Prepare for limited group O red cell supply since many group O red cells are drawn by double red cell apheresis collection
- Plan to receive non-leukoreduced red cells (with or without a separate bedside leukoreduction filter)
- Plan to receive 35-day red cells collected in a new whole blood bag kit

Questions and Additional Information:

We will keep you posted as the manufacturers try to re-establish inventories.
Please contact hospitalrelations@carterbloodcare.org with any concerns.

By working together, we can safely sustain operations.