

For Immediate Release

Be Someone's Type: Western Cape Blood Service Aims for 4,000 New Blood Donors in 2024

Western Cape - 2 January 2024. The Western Cape Blood Service (WCBS) aims to collect 700 units of blood every day to supply the Western Cape with a safe, sufficient blood supply. Ideally, 1-2% of the population should donate blood. The Western Cape population grew to 7.6 million over the past year. In order to keep up with the demand for blood and the ever-growing population, WCBS aim to increase their active donor base with 4,000 new blood donors in the coming year. Currently, we have 72 200 active blood donors. An active blood donor is someone who donates at least one unit of blood (whether it is plasma, platelets or whole blood) in a year. WCBS also aims to collect 163,000 units of blood throughout the year to meet the needs of patients.

The youth plays a pivotal role in the sustainability of the donor base. “Empowering the youth to donate blood isn’t just about meeting immediate needs; it’s an investment in the future sustainability of our blood supply,” says Marike Carli, Public Relations Manager at WCBS.

At present, the donor base by age group are as follows:

- 16 - 18 -year-old - 8%
- 19 - 25-year-old - 14%
- 26 - 29-year-old - 7%
- 30 - 39-year-old - 18%
- 40 - 49-year-old - 20%
- 50 - 59-year-old - 18%
- 60 + year-old - 15%

WCBS hopes to actively increase the youth portion of the donor base so that 10% of the total active donor base are represented by 16 - 18-year-old donors and that we remain at 14% of the total active donor for 19 - 25-year-old donors.

“We encourage all blood donors to be someone’s type this year by committing to donating blood at least four times in 2024”, Carli added. Each donor who achieves this milestone will receive an extra token of appreciation. Donors will have the choice of selecting either a neoprene laptop bag, a weekender bag or a backpack on their 4th donation. Donors older than 65 will receive it on their 3rd donation. High school learners can start donating blood at 16 years old. No parental consent is needed. Learners should, however, complete the POPIA form, and parents should sign this legal consent document for processing of information.

With ongoing education efforts and campaigns, WCBS would like to educate the youth about the importance of blood donation and their essential role in saving lives. “In 2023, we launched our Super 9 Club. This campaign encourages youth donors to make nine donations

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Western Cape Blood Service NPC | Pr. No: 7800045 | Reg. No: 1943/016692/08

Directors: GRM Bellairs, NB du Toit, N Dhevcharran, A Huggett, CF Ingram, EC Johannes, VJ Louw, UD Mungal-Singh, DM Ndebele, M Moyo, PK Slack (Chairman), PJC Veldhuizen. Company Secretary: Themis Commercial Legal Advisors (Pty) Ltd

before their 19th birthday, and by doing so, we are trying to cultivate a culture of life-long life-savers”, Carli added.

Blood donation only takes 30 minutes of your time, and you can donate every 56 days. If you are between 16 and 75, weigh 50kg or more, are in good general health, and lead a safe sexual lifestyle, you should be able to donate. Blood donation does not cause you any bodily harm - only 475ml of blood is taken, and this is replaced within 24 hours. Carli advises donors to eat a substantial meal within three to four hours before visiting a clinic and to increase their fluid intake before, during and after donation.

Blood is transfused every day in hospitals to patients in need. It is not only used for trauma, but also scheduled operations, during childbirth and for patients suffering from a variety of illnesses, including blood disorders like haemophilia and sickle cell anaemia, cancer, and auto-immune disorders.

For more information or to find your closest blood donation clinic, please visit www.wcbs.org.za, download the WCBS App, or send a WhatsApp to 060 549 7244.

This year, be someone’s type. Donate blood.

Distributed by the Western Cape Blood Service
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