

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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16-Year-Olds Now Able to Donate Blood

(St. Petersburg, FL: August 14, 2006): Florida Blood Services (FBS) has joined the list of blood centers around the country that now allow 16-year-olds to donate blood for their community. Beginning August 15, 2006, 16-year-old students will be able to donate blood with their parents' consent. All eligible donors must have a signed permission slip from their parents prior to each and every donation. Permission slips can be found at all FBS Donor Centers, Bloodmobiles, FBS website at www.fbsblood.org and all High School Blood Drive Coordinators.

"Donating blood is a civic responsibility that we all should share. The younger we can start people donating, the more educated they will become. They will realize how important it is to give back to their community. They can become lifelong donors." states J.B. Gaskins, Vice President of Donor Systems for Florida Blood Services. "This new initiative will have a huge impact on our community's blood supply. High School blood drives currently account for approximately 12% of the greater Tampa Bay blood supply. Adding 16-year-olds to the mix could impact our local supplies by as much as 5% or 10,000 units annually."

Florida Blood Services provides for the blood needs of patients at 38 hospitals in Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco and Pinellas Counties through the participation of volunteer blood donors. Approximately 750 donations are required daily, due to the high quality of medical care in Tampa Bay that serves the most critically ill patients throughout West Central Florida. If you have any questions, please call 1-800-68-BLOOD (25663) or visit our website at www.fbsblood.org.

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