



*"Quality Care Close to Home"*

800 East Highway 71  
Smithville, Texas 78957

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SMITHVILLE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY NEWS  
December 26, 2002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Smithville Regional Hospital helps launch National Volunteer Blood Donor Month**

Smithville Regional Hospital, in conjunction with the Central Texas Blood and Tissue Center will launch National Volunteer Blood Donor Month 2003 to encourage donors to give or pledge to give blood on Wednesday, January 29<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 1 pm in the hospital parking lot.

Once again, the theme for this year's campaign, "Give Blood...The Gift of Life," highlights the importance of giving the gift of life through the donation of blood. Fewer than five percent of healthy Americans eligible to donate blood actually donate each year. And with an aging population and advances in medical treatments and procedures requiring blood transfusions, the demand for blood continues to increase.

January is usually a difficult month for blood centers to collect blood donations, due to fewer people donating during the holidays, poor weather, and more people getting sick. A reduction in turnout can put blood inventory at a critical low. In some parts of the country, blood centers are currently on critical appeal.

There is a continuous need for blood and most individuals do not realize that donated blood has a short shelf life - approximately 42 days for red blood cells - which means that our blood supply needs to be constantly replenished. The Central Texas area has a continuing critical need for blood throughout the year and our challenge is to keep meeting this need every day.

If you are at least 17 years of age (some states permit younger people to donate with parental consent), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in good health, you may be eligible to donate blood. Celebrate National Blood Donor Month by "Giving the Gift of Life" and encouraging others to donate as well.

People who are interested in becoming blood donors should call the Hospital Laboratory at 512/237-5769 or toll free at 1-866-360-3219 ext. 769 to schedule an appointment.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
MARKETING DEPARTMENT  
SMITHVILLE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY  
512-360-2121