

March 13, 2020

Memorandum

To: Physicians, Housestaff, Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants

From: Alexander J. Indrikovs, MD, Professor of Pathology and Lab Medicine

Mark P. Jarrett, MD, SVP & Chief Quality Officer Deputy Chief Medical Officer

Re: Mitigation of Potential Blood and Platelet Shortages

Supply shortages of red blood cells and platelets predictively occur during holidays and summer vacation when collections decrease. Shortages can also occur during disasters and emergencies that create distress in our communities. In these situations, the blood donor base in the local (or wider) area may not be able to donate, and the local blood center may not be able to adequately collect, process, import or distribute blood components. During these challenging events, blood centers and hospitals must synergize efforts to optimize blood collections and transfusions.

The COVID-19 pandemic can negatively affect the local blood supply.

Although it is encouraging that the New York Blood Center continues to report adequate blood collections and distribution, and that Northwell Hospitals have adequate and stable blood inventories, this situation may change with short notice.

Northwell Hospitals have an obligation to maintain adequate blood inventories and ensure that transfusions are prescribed when clinically indicated. When blood inventories are limited, conservative transfusion practices become even more important to help us preserve blood and platelets for patients with the most urgent and non-elective transfusion requirements.

To assist with your transfusion decisions, the *Northwell Health Transfusion Indications* are available at <https://intranet.northwell.edu/NSLIJ/policies/NS-LIJ/SystemLab/Transfusion%20Indications.pdf>.

We strongly urge you to adhere to these evidence-based transfusion indications, and to prescribe units of blood and/or platelets only when absolutely necessary.