

Blood Providers

COVID-19 Pandemic Healthcare Surge Strategies Framework

Blood providers should follow the [latest regulatory guidance](#) from the Washington Department of Health (DOH), and U.S. Food and Drug Administration – Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (FDA/CBER). For questions, facilities should reach out to DOH or the Northwest Healthcare Response Network (NWHRN). For specific outbreak management and implementation guidance, facilities should reach out and follow the guidance of their local health jurisdiction (LHJ).

NWHRN Engagement

- Contact the NWHRN to sign up for regional situational awareness emails and receive coordination meeting invitations
- Contact the NWHRN Duty Officer when there are questions, concerns, or resource requests -24/7 Duty Officer line: [425-988-2897](tel:425-988-2897), HECC email: HECC@nwhrn.org
- Participate in situational awareness and coordination efforts

Interdependencies

- Follow local, state, and federal required and/or recommended COVID-19 infection prevention and related guidance
- Participate in information sharing and coordination calls
- Submit resource requests as needed to the LHJ or NWHRN, after exhausting any other channels for essential supplies and equipment
- Collaborate with regional partners on information sharing and best practices
- Share data with response agencies as requested or required, such as updates on resource supplies (blood products, PPE, etc.) or barriers preventing donors from participating in blood donation, supply chain issues, and other critical challenges
- Reach out to partners with questions or concerns
- Work with regional hospitals to reduce patient surge volumes and share scarce resources

Response Partners

- [Northwest Healthcare Response Network](#) – *Western Washington Healthcare Coalition*
- [Local Health Jurisdiction](#) – *Local public health authority*
- [Washington Department of Health](#) – *State public health authority*
- [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA/CBER\)](#) – *Federal regulatory authority*

Interpandemic Phase (Preparedness)

- Staff training for PPE use, screening protocols, infection control measures, and regular refresher trainings, especially as guidance and protocols often
- Identify opportunities to support staff with mental health, housing, and childcare needs
- Reduce donor fear with outreach about additional safety protocols
- Establish a PPE inventory baseline and [track usage / burn rate](#)
- Provide signage in multiple languages on COVID-19 related safety protocols
- Develop, update, and/or review internal and organization Continuity of Operations plans to ensure the continuity of essential services

Alert & Pandemic Phase (Response)

- Follow the latest regulatory guidance and requirements
- Implement infection control, health screening, staff testing, and visitor/vendor restrictions, as necessary. Educate, encourage, and enforce safety protocols. Consider:
 - Working with vendors to schedule their arrival either before or after operational hours
 - Extending hours and staggering donor appointments to reduce the number of people in your facility
 - Limiting walk-in donations and prioritizing appointment-only donations
 - Working with building maintenance to maximize indoor ventilation
- Preempt fears by notifying donors about changes in safety protocols and consider providing additional perks to encourage donations, such as antibody testing
- Coordinate outreach messaging with health agencies and organizations
- Consider ways to reduce barriers to donor access. Barriers may include transportation restrictions, childcare needs, fear around COVID-19, etc.
- Implement PPE conservation strategies when required
- Strongly encourage all staff to receive full dose(s) of COVID-19 vaccine. Consider vaccine status when assigning staff to high-risk duties
- Coordinate blood supply between facilities and providers to account for a decrease in donations and ensure continuity of critical blood supplies

Transitional Phase (Recovery)

- Document decisions made, and response actions and operations
- Document what went well, areas for improvement, and lessons learned
- Identify what is needed to return to normal operations. Create a time-based plan for achieving this
- Conduct debriefs with administration and staff
- Provide mental and behavioral health support for staff
- Develop an after-action report, identify corrective/improvement actions to implement, ideally before the next surge in cases