

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? This is National Blood Donor Week

June 11 to 17 is National Blood Donor Week.

It is an opportunity to remember the importance of giving blood.

According to Canadian Blood Services, in 2017 more than 105,000 new blood donors are needed across Canada to help patients who require blood transfusions. Half of all Canadians will either need blood products themselves or know someone who will.

Blood products are an essential part of major surgeries medical procedures, cancer treatments and managing disease. It takes many donors to help save a hospital patient. For example, five donors are needed to save someone undergoing cardiovascular surgery and eight donors a week to help someone undergoing treatment for leukemia. A severe car crash can require up to 50 donors to save a life. Since blood products only have a shelf life of about five days, the demand for new blood is substantial. Canadian Blood Services says it needs to collect an average of 17,000 units of blood per week.

There are a variety of blood types which determine who you can donate to, or receive blood from. Blood types range from the most common O+ to the rarest AB-. Individuals with type O negative (O-) are considered universal donors, as they can donate red blood cells to all other blood types. Meanwhile individuals with AB positive AB+ are considered universal recipients for red blood cells as they can receive from any other blood type. Because there are different blood types and individuals can only receive certain blood types, all blood types are critical to maintain a healthy blood supply system.

Roughly half of all Canadians are eligible to donate blood, yet less than four per cent of eligible donors actually do. If you don't know if you can, find out. You can visit www.blood.ca and take their eligibility quiz and potentially book an appointment to give blood. It only takes about an hour of your time, and it can literally save someone's life.

Clinics are regularly held at the Orangeville Best Western; the Erin Legion Hall; Caledon Community Complex; the Albion/Bolton Community Centre, Highpoint Community School in Dundalk and the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex. Visit www.blood.ca to find out when a clinic near you is available for an appointment.

There is a growing need to donate. Officials are saying due to low donation during the winter and spring, Canada is at risk of failing to meet demand in the event of a crisis. Canadian blood services inventory needs to sit about 30,000 units, but currently they have less than 13,000 donations in stock across the country.

I encourage you to find out if you can give blood, and ?Give the gift of Life? to someone.

