

For Immediate Release

Contact: Brite Whitaker, LifeSouth Directory of Communications and Outreach
352-224-1728 bbwhitaker@lifesouth.org

LifeSouth seeks recovered COVID-19 patients to donate convalescent plasma

As COVID-19 cases continue to increase, the need for convalescent plasma is on the rise. LifeSouth is partnering with local medical centers to find plasma from blood donors who have recovered from the virus to help critically ill patients fighting the virus.

Convalescent plasma is the liquid portion of blood collected from blood donors who have recovered from COVID-19. Recovered patients form antibodies, these antibodies are found in plasma. Convalescent plasma therapy is considered an investigational drug by the FDA and is widely used as a treatment by doctors in many local hospitals to help severely ill coronavirus patients. When transfused, the antibodies can help patients recover against the virus.

LifeSouth is now testing all successful blood donors for COVID-19 antibodies in search of convalescent plasma. Healthy blood donors who may have been exposed or recovered from COVID-19 are asked to donate. As part of the normal blood donations process, a test will be performed on the donor's blood to determine if antibodies are present in the plasma.

LifeSouth's Vice President of Medical Services, Dr. Chris Lough, explains that there is no nasal swab used on blood donors. "Unlike a test to determine if someone currently has the COVID-19 virus, the antibody screen we use tests a blood sample collected during donation," said Lough. "Individuals should understand that we are not testing for the live virus itself, if you are interested in knowing if you are infected with COVID-19, you should visit your physician or locate a public testing site."

Convalescent plasma donors must be fully recovered from the virus and symptom free before coming to LifeSouth to donate.

LifeSouth asks for help spreading the word to those who have recovered from COVID-19. Potential donors should visit www.lifesouth.org or call 888-795-2707 to schedule an appointment.