

VA

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Eastern Colorado Health Care System

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Media Release
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VA ECHCS partners with Vitalant to meet blood need

AURORA, Colo. – VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS) joined a nationwide effort to fight the shortage of lifesaving blood during the COVID-19 pandemic.

VA medical centers across the United States are partnering with collection agencies to host blood drives and encourage donations. In partnership with Vitalant, VA ECHCS will host blood drives Feb. 3 and March 2 at Rocky Mountain Regional (RMR) VA Medical Center in Aurora.

Volunteer donors are the only source of the blood needed to treat trauma and chronic illness, inside and outside VA health care systems. Medical facilities need 33,000 blood donations every day to meet patient needs, according to America's Blood Centers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of regularly scheduled blood drives were cancelled.

“Together, we can make a difference,” said Eva Gergely, chief, VA ECHCS Center for Development and Civic Engagement, who is coordinating with Vitalant to host collection sites, as part of the VA national blood drive through March.

“We look forward to everyone sharing their health and rolling up their sleeves to fight the blood shortage,” she said. Veterans, along with their family members and friends, are encouraged to share their blood donations on social media with the hashtag #RollUpYourSleeveVA.

The initiative supports VA’s “fourth mission” to back up the nation’s health care systems in times of disaster. It will help meet blood needs in communities across the country, as well as help VA continue to meet its near-term blood needs for Veterans.

Gergely said RMR VA Medical Center decided to support this effort after determining it would not negatively impact Veteran care.

Vitalant will staff and run the events in a blood mobile parked at RMR VA Medical Center. The nonprofit blood services provider will ensure the procedures, furnishings and supplies needed to help keep donors and staff safe. Founded in 1943, Vitalant manages a national network of about 120 donation centers across the United States.

Healthy individuals who wish to donate blood can make their pledge now with VA ECHCS at Northeast.Vitalant.org/pledge?drive_code=DEN5720&division=MOUNTAIN%26%25region=DEN.

Would-be donors can search for convenient locations across Colorado and other states at [Vitalant.org](https://www.vitalant.org). To participate at RMR VA Medical Center, search for blood drive code 5720. Appointments are scheduled between 11 a.m. and 5:45 p.m.

For information on blood donation and donor eligibility visit [Vitalant.org/donate/donor-eligibility.aspx](https://www.vitalant.org/donate/donor-eligibility.aspx).

VA ECHCS 'Roll Up Your Sleeve' Blood Drive

When: Thursday, Feb., 3, and Wednesday, March 2, from 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.
What: Respond to an ongoing need across the country by making an appointment to donate in a blood mobile at Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center.
Who: Healthy and eligible blood donors.
Where: Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center
1700 North Wheeling Street
Aurora, CO 80045

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Attached Photos



211115-001 – A Vitalant blood mobile parks Nov. 15, 2021, at Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center in VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System. VA ECHCS partners with Vitalant to host blood drives at VA facilities, where volunteers can contribute to ensuring a steady blood supply for patients throughout the country. (Courtesy Photo/VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System)