

MEC Dhlomo responds to the Blood Bank's desperate call for blood donation, urges others also to donate and give the precious gift of life

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With blood stocks at critical levels enough to last just 1,3 days, KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has responded to the blood bank's desperate calls for blood donation – and he is urging the public to also heed this desperate call to help save lives.

People in urgent need of regular blood supply may include mothers giving birth, cancer patients, people involved in road crashes, and patients who suffer complications during major surgery.

But Mr Sifiso Khoza, KZN regional marketing director at the South African National Blood Service, says the organisation is concerned that blood donors have not been donating enough blood lately.

"We currently only have blood that is enough to last 1,3 days. People just do not donate. We are not quite sure why, and it has taken us by surprise. We do not know what went wrong. The situation is critical. We are appealing to residents of KwaZulu-Natal – active donors, potential donors and lapsed donors – to help to bolster the regional blood stock."

Although all blood types are needed, blood group-O is in demand as it is universal and can be transferable to all patients in need.

MEC Dhlomo, who is a blood-O donor, is moved by the plight of the SANBS, and has urged all South Africans who are eligible to step forward and help save lives.



Speaking while donating blood at Umlazi Megacity yesterday (11 May 2018), MEC Dhlomo said: *"I am always concerned when I hear that the province has low blood stocks. It always serves as a timely reminder for me to honour my appointment to donate blood. I would wish that all of us who are already regular blood donors can remember and honour the days of our appointments. We are not meeting the required levels, and that is extremely concerning. So we are calling upon other South Africans who are not yet regular blood donors to come forward and assist us."*

"Every South African between the ages of 16 and 65; who is in good health and whose blood is considered safe to really come forward and assist. Donating blood is a gift of life. You give someone else a chance to live, and live better. I urge all of us to try our best to do that," says the MEC.

Regular blood donor Nozipho Cebekhulu (25), from Umlazi, who was also donating blood yesterday, echoed the MEC's sentiments. "Donating blood is a gift that no money can buy. If I can save or prolong another person's life with my blood, I think that's more than any gift that I can give to another person. Tomorrow, you might need blood and find that there's not enough. That should be enough motivation for all of us to stand up and go and donate blood," she said.

(To find out more about donating blood and to locate your nearest SANBS donor centre in KwaZulu-Natal, visit sanbs.org.za or call 0800 11 90 31.)