

For Immediate Release

Contact: **Kelley Gregory**
Cascade Regional Blood Services
253-383-2553

Cascade Regional Blood Services to Honor Blood Collection Professionals

Tacoma, WA, September 12, 2005 – During the week of September 18-24, Cascade Regional Blood Services will join other blood centers across the country in celebrating the inaugural Blood Collectors Week, sponsored by AABB and Baxter Healthcare Corporation. This annual recognition week will recognize and celebrate the critical role blood collectors serve in helping to ensure blood is available to patients in need.

On Monday, September 19, Cascade Regional Blood Services will host a luncheon to honor its blood collection staff. Community members are encouraged to show their support for this profession by making a blood donation and helping blood collectors meet local blood supply needs. For more information or to schedule a donation, please call 1-877-24-BLOOD or visit cascadebloodcenters.org.

According to AABB, about 29 million units of blood components are transfused annually in the United States. Locally, nearly 35,000 units are transfused at local Pierce and South King county hospitals. These units are transfused to people undergoing critical therapies and surgeries, such as trauma victims and cancer patients, and other procedures requiring blood therapy. Volunteer blood donors are the primary source of blood used for transfusions.

Blood collection professionals serve an important role in educating donors and helping to ensure a safe and comfortable donation experience. Blood collection staff will help facilitate either a whole blood or apheresis donation. In a whole blood donation, a pint of blood is collected and then divided into its therapeutic components for transfusion. With an apheresis donation, a donor gives a specific therapeutic component—platelets, plasma or red blood cells. Red blood cells represent the blood component in highest demand with about 14 million units transfused annually.

“All individuals who support blood collection are making an important contribution to the health and well-being of our local community by helping to ensure blood is available to patients in need,” said Maureen McCarthy, Director of Donor Collections at Cascade Regional Blood Services. “Blood Collectors Week is a tribute to this vital profession and we are proud to honor our staff.”

Cascade Regional Blood Services’ mission is to provide a constant, safe and cost effective supply of blood and blood components to the communities it serves. Cascade serves ten local hospitals in Pierce and South King counties.

###

