

Give a pint of blood, get a pint of beer – I'll drink to that

CASCADE REGIONAL:

'It's a fun way for us to get more donors'

BY STEVE MAYNARD
The News Tribune

A Tacoma-based blood center is appealing to donors with an eye-catching offer: Give a pint of blood, get a pint of beer.

The promotion has worked well at six Tacoma pubs and breweries in the past 16 months, organizers say. Now Cascade Regional Blood Services is expanding its "Give blood, get beer" promotion, bringing its bloodmobile to a pub in Federal Way this week and Steilacoom later this month.

"It's a fun way for us to get more donors, and it's good for the restaurants as well," said Jamie Pernaa, who lines up the businesses for Cascade.

Cascade is the first blood center in Washington to use the promotion, called a "Pint-for-Pint Blood Drive," said Pernaa,

community relations specialist.

"It's just a fun thing to do," said Dan Schmitt, Cascade's director of donor resources.

Donors who are at least 21 years old are given a coupon for a free pint of beer. The pub must wait at least four to six hours after the blood drive ends before donors can cash in on their free pint.

Schmitt said he first heard of a beer-for-blood drive several years ago at a meeting where other blood centers said the approach was successful. Years later, Schmitt suggested trying it in Tacoma.

Donors often eat at the pubs before giving blood and return later for their free beer, said Lauren Buchholz, who handles marketing and community support for Cascade. That social aspect is what makes the "Pint-for-Pint Blood Drives" fun for donors, Buchholz said. The coupons are good only for the business that Cascade's bloodmobile visits that day.

Cascade's organizers say they've received no complaints about giving away beer.

GIVE BLOOD. GET BEER

What: Pint-for-Pint Blood Drive

Who: Cascade Regional Blood Services bloodmobile

When and where:

■ 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday, Scoreboard Pub, 1200 S. 324th St., Federal Way.

■ 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Jan. 22, Jimmy Mac's Roadhouse, 34902 Pacific Highway S., Federal Way.

■ 1-4 p.m. Jan. 22, The Spar, 2121 N. 30th

St., Tacoma.

■ 1-5 p.m. Jan. 30, Steilacoom Pub & Grill, 1202 Rainier St., Steilacoom.

What to know: Donors are asked to sign up in advance, but drop-ins are accepted.

More information:

Cascade Regional Blood Services, 253-383-2553 or www.crbs.net.

Steve Maynard, The News Tribune

Karen Minahan, a regional spokeswoman for Mothers Against Drunk Driving, said her organization doesn't have a problem with the promotion as long as it complies with Washington State Liquor Control Board regulations and no beer is given to anyone younger than 21.

Cascade uses a variety of giveaways to encourage people to donate blood, from drawings for donated iPods in the summer to donated ski lift tickets in December and January.

Each of the blood drives at the six Tacoma pubs and breweries has averaged about 15 donors, which Cascade says is about its goal.

That number is only a fraction of the 150 donors Cascade needs every day to maintain the blood supply for South King and Pierce counties. Cascade has about 100 blood drives a month.

Cascade Regional Blood Services is the sole provider of blood and blood products for MultiCare Health System and Fran-

ciscan Health System in South King and Pierce counties.

The Swiss pub in downtown Tacoma was first in September 2008 to hold a "Pint-for-Pint" drive and held another one 13 months later.

"It was just a great opportunity for our customers and the people who work around here to make it real easy to give blood," said Swiss co-owner Jack McQuade.

Cascade pays the pubs a negotiated fee for the beers the blood center gives away. State regulations say the promotion is OK as long as businesses are paid for the cost of their beer, said Anne Radford, a liquor board spokeswoman.

McQuade said the drives at the Swiss don't encourage drinking and people didn't give blood simply to get a beer.

"It was just an added bonus," he said. "It was a good thing to do for the community."

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