

2025.01 Provision of a Blood Donation Service for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

- Resolved, that the Antigonish Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada in 103rd annual diocesan meeting and convention assembled, urge Canadian Blood Services, in collaboration with community partners, to provide a blood donation service for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality; and be it
- Resolved, that the Antigonish Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada in 103rd annual diocesan meeting and convention assembled, urge the Cape Breton Regional Municipality to urge Canadian Blood Services, in collaboration with community partners, to provide a blood donation service for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality; and be it
- Resolved, that the Antigonish Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada in 103rd annual diocesan meeting and convention assembled, through the provincial council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada, urge the Nova Scotia provincial government to urge Canadian Blood Services, in collaboration with community partners, to provide a blood donation service for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality; and be it
- Resolved, that this resolution be forwarded through national council to the provincial councils, urging them to become aware of this topic as it pertains to their province/territory, and to act on it as deemed necessary/prudent; and be it
- Resolved, that this resolution be forwarded to the Nova Scotia Provincial Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada for consideration at its 2025 annual meeting of members/convention.

Brief: Provision of a Blood Donation Service for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality

The need for blood, plasma, and platelets is constant as many rely on these donations every day (Callum). Recently Canadian Blood Services (CBS), which manages the Canadian blood system, has been facing significant challenges in meeting Canada's blood supply. More than 100,000 new donors are needed every single year ("Canadian Blood Services") and bookings are not keeping pace with the rise in demand for blood products ("Rapid Growth in Demand"). Decreased blood donations have resulted in advisories of low blood inventory since May 2019 ("Inventory Advisories", "National Blood Shortages Plan"). One Nova Scotia family experienced this firsthand in October 2023 when their young son, diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia and in early treatment, received only half of his required platelet transfusion (MacDonald). Since closure of the blood donation clinic in Sydney in 2015, donors in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) must travel to Port Hawkesbury to donate, a round trip of approximately four to five hours. The time and distance involved make this impractical, costly and inefficient. This could be resolved by the provision of a blood donation service for the CBRM.

Donation, retention of donors and frequency of donations are negatively affected as donation time and inconvenience increase due to clinic inaccessibility (Charbonneau et al 3-5; Cimaroli 6, 23, 25-27; Paez et al 93-95; Haw et al 1328). Community support for a blood donation service has been expressed through media, a petition (Porter) with over 6000 household signatures, and letters to CBS.

CBS prioritizes location (Letter) and diversification ("This is Why We Need") in planning donation events. CBRM, the second largest municipality in Nova Scotia, with a population of over 109,000 (Nova Scotia Canada), two First Nations communities and an increased international presence, offers density and diversity. A mobile clinic operates in Yarmouth, NS. The distances from CBRM and Yarmouth's mobile clinic to CBS's manufacturing site in Dartmouth are comparable.

The CBS website reads: "Engaging the next generation of blood, plasma and stem cell donors and advocates is important to sustain **Canada's Lifeline** into the future" (Walsh). Cape Breton University (CBU) has a current enrollment of approximately 6700 students from 70 countries. CBU will house the province's second medical school in August 2025 and an expanded health and counselling centre. The newly constructed campus of the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), currently has approximately 1200 students and staff, with potential for growth. Mobile collection venues, accessible to students, would provide an opportunity for CBS to acquire an increased blood and stem cell donor base and leaders for the Next Gen Lifeline program.

Phlebotomy provides therapeutic benefit to those with hemochromatosis. This inherited disorder is most common in people of Celtic descent, such as the CBRM demographic, and affects 1 in 300 people. Without access to a CBS donation clinic, this iron rich blood is being disposed as medical waste instead of making "a lifesaving difference to a patient in need" ("Partners for Life").

Organizations, community groups, universities, and colleges across Canada have been participating in the *Partners for Life* program with CBS for many years. Participation in this worthy program by our residents, known for their legacy of giving and dedication to supporting health care needs, is hampered by lack of a local clinic.

Every minute of every day, someone in Canada needs blood. A blood donation service in the CBRM would provide residents with the accessibility and opportunity to strengthen Canada's blood supply and to give the gift of life through the miracle of blood and blood products. We urge Canadian Blood Services to work with community partners to provide a blood donation service for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

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Action Plan: Provision of a Blood Donation Service for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality

1. Encourage CWL members to write letters to Canadian Blood Services to support action on the resolution.
2. Raise awareness of the resolution to gather support from parishioners, community members and community partners.
3. Encourage members to write letters to the premier, provincial minister of health, local MLAs, and mayor and councillors of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality urging support of the resolution.
4. Monitor Canadian Blood Services' response to the resolution and keep members informed.