Dear Colleagues,

As we transition into a New Year, we felt it important to provide an update on our blood stock position. Firstly, we would like to thank all hospitals that have worked with us over the last 12 months to help ensure that we meet the transfusion needs of all patients.

Overall, red cell demand is still reducing, but the decline trend is slowing down (demand is down by -1.6% over the last 12 months vs. -2.1% 12 months prior). Demand for O D negative is, however, increasing and represented 14.1% of total demand in December 2019. This is the highest level of demand as a percentage of total issues we have seen (only 7% of the UK population are O D negative therefore December’s demand reached double the population prevalence). Whilst our stock levels of O D negative are currently adequate, we will be challenged to continue to supply at this level if the upward trend in demand continues. Whilst we appreciate that there is already significant focus on the appropriate use of O D negative, we would be very grateful if Hospital Transfusion Committees could specifically discuss any further opportunities to reduce inappropriate use. We would welcome any specific feedback around changes in demand in your organisation to inform our future demand planning process. We would like to remind you of availability of the O D negative toolkit on our Hospital and Science website:

https://hospital.blood.co.uk/patient-services/patient-blood-management/o-d-negative-red-cell-toolkit/

To maximise collection opportunities and recognise the huge contribution of O D negative donors, NHSBT has launched the First Responders initiative. This is an online space for every O negative donor, providing priority access to appointments, plus exclusive videos, donor stories and information about this life-saving blood type. First Responders was launched in November 2019 and we are already seeing significant uplifts in donors coming forward. You can find more information through the link below. We would be grateful for your support in promoting this important initiative:


Over the last 4 weeks, demand for AB negative red cells has been approximately 10% higher than forecast. Consequently, our stocks levels of this group are currently low. We have invited AB negative donors to come forward to increase our stock position as quickly as possible. However, whilst we re-build our stock, we would appreciate your support in accepting A negative red cells as a substitute when offered.

We continue to be challenged in meeting the demand for Ro blood. Demand for Ro red cells has doubled in the last 3 years as the number of sickle cell patients move to automatic exchange programmes. We currently fulfil c.50% of Ro demand with
actual Ro units and issue ABO r as a substitution where we cannot fulfil demand (you will appreciate that this is placing pressure on O D and B negative stocks). We appreciate your ongoing support in providing as much notice as possible for Ro blood and for accepting clinically appropriate substitutions.

Supply and demand challenges were discussed at the National Blood Transfusion Committee Executive Working Group this week. A presentation illustrating demand changes and supply challenges, with a call for your ongoing support in helping to address these, is being shared via the Regional Transfusion Committee network. If you require additional information or data to support internal discussions, please contact your local Patient Blood Management Practitioner or Hospital Customer Services Manager.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to inform you that our work to transition to self-sufficiency in domestic plasma is progressing well. We will be shortly issuing a more comprehensive update outlining how our pricing considerations are progressing and changes we are undertaking to enable revised FFP/cryo ordering arrangements after April 2020.

We very much appreciate your ongoing support to help ensure we that continue to meet the transfusion needs of patients.

Please do not hesitate to contact either of us if you have any queries regarding this communication. If you would like further information or support, please contact your Patient Blood Management Practitioner or Customer Service Manager. Alternatively phone our Response Desk on 0208 201 3107, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Kind regards,

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