

# We will double our plasma collections (and no, we won't pay donors to do it)

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You may have heard in the news that Canadian Blood Services is planning to pay donors to donate plasma. I'd like to set the record straight: we do not pay donors for blood, plasma or any other kind of donation, and we are not going to do so. The confusion began after a recent media interview I did, which resulted in [this article](#). I was asked whether we would rule out the possibility of paying plasma donors, and I stated that our plan is to collect considerably more plasma through our non-remunerated system. I acknowledged that if, at some future point in time we were not able to significantly grow the plasma base in this country with unpaid donors, we would have to consider our options, which could include remuneration. It was a hypothetical question, and I shared a hypothetical response. It has never been our practice, and it is not our plan to pay donors.

The reason I was asked about paying plasma donors in the first place is due to public interest in Canadian Plasma Resources, which recently opened in Saskatoon. This company offers donors a \$25 gift card in exchange for donating plasma. There has been some confusion about our relationship with Canadian Plasma Resources, so I'd also like to be very clear on this point: we do not purchase plasma from Canadian Plasma Resources, we have no contract with them to do so, and we have no obligation to do business with them in the future.

As I've [explained before in my blog](#) and elsewhere, Canadian Blood Services is finalizing a strategy and business plan to significantly expand our plasma collections to ensure we operate in the most effective way, with the right balance of products derived from Canadian plasma ("toll manufactured products") and those manufactured from the U.S. paid plasma donor pool ("commercial products"). Achieving the right balance is a very important part of our strategy ensuring security of supply for Canadian patients.

Over the coming years, our goal is to more than double the amount of plasma we collect. Right now, we collect close to 200,000 litres of plasma per year. We will need to collect 400,000 to 500,000 thousand litres in the next number of years to diversify our supply and be less reliant on foreign markets. We believe we can do this through voluntary donations and will not be paying donors.

What will this ambitious goal look like? It may mean building a standalone plasma system with a dedicated and specialized staff, recruiting plasma donors in densely populated locations where it makes the most sense to do so, and investing in new infrastructure to support plasma collections.

Today, the amount of plasma we collect only meets approximately 25 per cent of the need for the specialized plasma-derived drugs Canadian patients need. The other 75 per cent of plasma needed for the plasma protein products we purchase for patients is made from plasma donated by paid donors in the United States.

All the major patient groups in this country, such as the Canadian Hemophilia Society or the immunodeficiency organizations, agree that there is no difference between plasma protein products made from plasma donated by paid donors or plasma donated by unpaid donors, because these products are equally safe. Their main concern, and one that we share, is that there be an adequate supply of safe product for the patients who rely on them.

By more than doubling our plasma collections, we will decrease our dependence on the international plasma industry, which is an important step to further ensuring a security of supply for plasma protein products. Even still, we can't put all of our eggs in one basket, and will continue to need access to plasma from other sources.

You will be hearing much more about our plasma strategy in the coming months. In the meantime, I encourage you to [visit our website](#) for more information on plasma donation, plasma manufacturing and safety, donor reimbursement and other relevant topics, including my latest video on our organization's policy with respect to payment for donations.

I invite you to engage in conversation with me on this topic. It is topical, important and will be a big part of our future.

By Graham Sher