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Blood donation clinic schedule for Sept. 17 in Shelburne

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Canadian Blood Services is holding a mobile blood drive clinic in Shelburne next month in support of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

?September is really special for us because it is childhood cancer awareness month and we really encourage donors across the country to help raise awareness for the lifesaving impacts that blood, plasma, stem cells have on childhood cancer patients,? said Elaine St. Pierre, territory manager for Canadian Blood Services.

The clinic will be held at the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex in Shelburne on Sept. 17, by appointment only, between 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Pierre said their goal is to collect 58 units of blood through the upcoming clinic.

While not commonly known, blood donations play an important role in cancer treatment.

?With many different cancers, blood and platelet transfusions are a common treatment and something that really helps to get them through as part of their treatment in a compliment to some of the chemotherapy that they receive,? said St. Pierre. ?You donating blood could potentially save someone's life.?

A leukemia patient, St. Pierre says, can go through up to eight blood donations during the course of their treatment.

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, childhood cancer is the most common disease-related cause of death in children.

?Cancer is one of those things that doesn't discriminate, and is still going on despite the pandemic,? said St. Pierre. ?Imagine having a child in your family that is fighting a cancer and in the middle of what's going on with COVID-19. We really want to show our support for those patients and let them know that we're behind them.?

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, following a call to action for donations, St. Pierre says that Canadian Blood Services saw a surge of people going to clinics to donate blood. With hospitals halting elective procedures and treatments that tend to have high use for blood, she notes they also experienced a dip in the demand.

Demand for blood donations has now returned to pre-pandemic levels, which St. Pierre said is about 17,000 units of blood at hospitals across the country everysingle week.

?Because of the short shelf life of blood, we have to make sure that we collect that and a little bit more every single week to make sure that we always have enough blood on hand for patients.?

St. Pierre also notes that only 1 in 2 Canadians are eligible to donate.

?If that's you, we need you,? she said.

At the time of print, Canadian Blood Services has over a dozen appointment spaces left for the Shelburne clinic.

Appointment can be booked atwww.blood.ca or call 1-888-2DONATE.