

# Next steps for increasing Canada's domestic supply chain for lifesaving immunoglobulins

Thursday, June 8, 2023

**June 8, 2023 (OTTAWA)** – Today, Grifols [announced](#) its next steps in fulfilling its contractual commitment to Canadian Blood Services, which includes a purchasing agreement with Canadian Plasma Resources. Under this arrangement, Grifols intends to acquire Canadian Plasma Resources' collection centres by the end of 2025.

On September 7, 2022, Canadian Blood Services [announced](#) a blueprint for action to ensure patients in Canada continue to have long-term access to immunoglobulins—the most widely used medication made from plasma, a component of blood. Significantly increasing Canadian Blood Services' non-remunerated plasma collection is a key pillar of the blueprint, with 11 new dedicated plasma donor centres opening by 2024—most of which have already opened. Another major pillar is establishing the country's first ever domestic end-to-end supply chain for these lifesaving medications, a critical lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic. Following a competitive request for proposal process, Canadian Blood Services signed an agreement with Grifols, a global healthcare company and leader in producing plasma medicines, to achieve this important goal.

“Our contract with Grifols will ensure 50 per cent plasma sufficiency for immunoglobulins, and a domestic supply chain to produce them, with necessary urgency,” says Dr. Graham Sher, Canadian Blood Services' CEO. “Grifols' purchasing arrangement with Canadian Plasma Resources is a significant development which means plasma collected in Canada will stay in Canada for patients in this country. It also further mitigates Canadian Blood Services' encroachment concerns by aligning commercial plasma activity to the national blood system via contractual controls. This alignment was a major recommendation of *Health Canada's Expert Panel on Immune Globulin Product Supply and Related Impacts* report in 2018.”

In addition to the agreement with Canadian Plasma Resources, Grifols' existing centre in Winnipeg and another site under development in Edmonton, Grifols will open as many as five more centres to meet its contractual obligations to Canadian Blood Services. As per the agreement, the locations of Grifols' new

centres in Canada are subject to Canadian Blood Services' approval. The location search includes Ontario, where Grifols would operate under the *Voluntary Blood Donations Act* as an agent of Canadian Blood Services. Grifols currently has no plans in British Columbia.

“Canadian Blood Services continues to value voluntary blood donations legislation in Canada. These laws offer responsible protections for Canadian Blood Services' integrated system that ensures blood and blood products for patients in Canada,” says Dr. Sher. “Our agreement with Grifols was specifically and purposefully drafted to comply with existing legislation, with Grifols acting only under exemption as an agent of Canadian Blood Services to help us meet patient need for domestically produced immunoglobulins during an ongoing global shortage of this lifesaving therapy.”

Through the agreement between Canadian Blood Services and Grifols, Canada will reach a minimum target of 50 per cent sufficiency for immunoglobulins in the shortest time possible, as recommended by the Ontario Auditor General in 2020 and an internationally recognized [risk-based decision-making analysis](#) in 2022. With support and funding from federal, provincial and territorial governments, Canadian Blood Services' 11 plasma donor centres will achieve approximately 25 per cent plasma sufficiency. Grifols' plasma collection will achieve the remaining 25 per cent, with manufacture of that plasma into immunoglobulins at Grifols' plant in Montréal (once up and running in 2026) exclusively for patients in Canada.

“Most of the plasma used to meet the immunoglobulin demand in Canada is sourced from the United States, where plasma donors are compensated. Concerns about partnering with a plasma company to collect plasma in Canada are extremely misguided—particularly as alarms about global supply are increasing,” says Jennifer van Gennip, Executive Director, Network of Rare Blood Disorder Organizations, a unified patient voice on matters of blood supply and safety in Canada. “We believe it is in the best interests of plasma product recipients in Canada for Grifols to operate as an agent of Canadian Blood Services in jurisdictions where there is voluntary blood donations legislation. With safety concerns mitigated completely, our focus is now on the security of the supply of plasma required for Canadian patients to have access to life-saving plasma-derived medicinal products when needed. The agreement between Canadian Blood Services and Grifols is a necessary tactic to achieve this.”

Donors make all the difference for patients and their families. In Canada, thousands more new plasma and blood donors are needed. Appointments can be booked online at [blood.ca](#) and on the GiveBlood app, or by calling 1-888-2-DONATE (1-888-236-6283).

## For more information

- [Blueprint for greater security of immunoglobulins for patients in Canada](#) (Media release, Sept. 2022)
- [A blood system blueprint for greater security of immunoglobulins for patients in Canada](#) (Backgrounder)
- [How are plasma protein and related products made?](#) (Video, run time 2:15)
- [Securing Canada's plasma supply](#)
- [Plasma and the blood system supply chain](#)

## About Canadian Blood Services

Canadian Blood Services is a not-for-profit charitable organization. Regulated by Health Canada as a biologics manufacturer and primarily funded by the provincial and territorial ministries of health, Canadian Blood Services operates with a national scope, infrastructure and governance that make it unique within Canadian healthcare. In the domain of blood, plasma and stem cells, we provide services for patients on behalf of all provincial and territorial governments except Quebec. The national transplant registry for interprovincial organ sharing and related programs reaches into all provinces and territories, as a biological lifeline for Canadians.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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