

Community Comment 1/8/2013

Most people are aware of the impending peak of the Baby Boom Generation and the impact it will have on a variety of aspects of our lives. From Social Security to Long Term care to Octogenarians behind the wheel to the next Rolling Stones Tour we have much to be concerned about in coming years. These impacts won't bypass the blood supply but we have an exciting opportunity to use technology to take advantage of changes in how blood components are used.

The need for Red Blood Cells has plateaued in recent years as blood conservation and other Hemovigilance measures have been implemented. At the same time, a focus on Platelet based treatments has increased the need for this vital component. With a substantial investment in technology, personnel and training NCCBB is ready to meet this need by collecting apheresis platelets by automated collection. This technique, in place for a number of years at the Blood Bank, involves the processing of blood components *during* donation. Based on Patient Need and donor blood type our staff can target the most appropriate donation for that donor, on that day.

Apheresis Platelet collection also provides for a donation of a substantially larger platelet dose while allowing the donor to retain Red Cells and Plasma. By targeting in this way we can better ensure that individual blood components aren't over-collected while meeting daily patient need. Because platelets have a very short lifespan within the body, they also have a very short life as a usable blood component. Platelets last only 5 days! In order to have platelets available to patients at any time they might be needed, it is vital that we have a constant, consistent process of collection in place.

Apheresis collections are possible only at the Blood Bank on Harrison Ave and have only been possible during the week. Additional hours have been added on Saturdays for convenience as well as to have available platelets to be transfused early in each week. We thank all of the donors who have given platelets by apheresis and invite anyone who hasn't to contact the Blood Bank to learn more about the process. With the communities' help, NCCBB will continue to meet the needs of the customers, donors and patients we serve in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible.

This has been John Gullam of the Northern California Community Blood Bank with a Community Comment.