



PRESS RELEASE

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Health care professionals with LSU Health Shreveport, Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport and LifeShare Blood Center provide first COVID-19 convalescent plasma therapy in Louisiana

At approximately 2:30 p.m., the first convalescent plasma therapy in Louisiana was provided to a critically ill COVID-19 patient at Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport Academic Medical Center. The transfused plasma was donated hours earlier by two people at LifeShare Blood Center in Shreveport. Both individuals who donated plasma at LifeShare are fully recovered from COVID-19.

“LifeShare is among the first centers in the country to partner with regional hospitals to provide this type of therapy for COVID-19 patients”, says LifeShare Medical Director Dr. Tim Peterson.

“The FDA just released new guidelines allowing us to investigational use convalescent plasma for patients with moderate to severe COVID-19 infections. The only source of this convalescent plasma is donations from people that have recovered for at least two weeks from COVID-19 and have produced antibodies. As cases are expected to peak in the coming week, LifeShare needs additional convalescent donors who are fully recovered from COVID-19. This is an important step in bridging a gap until a suitable vaccine is developed,” stated Dr. G. E. Ghali, Chancellor of LSU Health Shreveport.

This investigative therapy uses convalescent plasma from individuals who have recovered from COVID-19. It is possible convalescent plasma contains antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) and might be effective against the infection. Use of convalescent plasma has been studied in

outbreaks of other respiratory infections, including the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus pandemic, 2004 SRS-CoV-1 epidemic, and the 2012 MERS-CoV epidemic.

“With the new LSU Health Shreveport Emerging Viral Threat Lab and its upcoming serology testing platform, we are uniquely able to identify potential convalescent plasma donors in collaboration with LifeShare to produce this potentially life saving therapy,” said Dr. Chris Kevil, Vice Chancellor for Research of LSU Health Shreveport.

Although promising, convalescent plasma has yet to be definitively shown to be effective in COVID-19. In addition to the establishment of clinical trials for convalescent plasma therapy, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is working with multiple federal partners and academia to open an expanded access protocol to facilitate access to COVID-19 convalescent plasma. For those not eligible to participate in a randomized clinical trial, access is being made available through participation of acute care facilities in an investigational expanded access protocol.

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ABOUT LSU HEALTH SHREVEPORT

LSU Health Shreveport is one of two Health Sciences Centers of the Louisiana State University System and one of only 154 in the nation. LSU Health Shreveport is home to the School of Medicine, School of Graduate Studies and School of Allied Health Professions, and a robust research enterprise. Almost 900 students are enrolled in the degree programs at any one time. Additionally, over 500 residents and fellows are trained each year. The primary mission of the LSU Health Sciences Center at Shreveport is to teach, heal, and discover, in order to advance the well-being of the region and beyond. At the heart of the LSU Health Shreveport is a strong faculty that includes a number of nationally and internationally acclaimed physicians and scientists. More than 600 strong, they lead our research efforts, educate our students and provide primary and specialty care to patients throughout the region. LSU Health Shreveport has strong community support, fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion that promotes mutual respect for all. For more information, visit www.lsuhs.edu.

ABOUT LIFESHARE BLOOD CENTER

LifeShare Blood Center regularly supplies blood components to approximately 100 medical facilities throughout Louisiana, East Texas and South Arkansas. Founded in Shreveport, Louisiana in 1942, it is a nonprofit community service provider governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees. With collection sites in nine cities, LifeShare operates daily blood mobiles to collect lifesaving blood products for use in our communities. LifeShare is a member of America’s Blood Centers (ABC) and the American Rare Donor Program (ARDP), is licensed by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and accredited by AABB.