

## April 19, 2006 Congressman John. P. Murtha To Support Blood Drive

For Immediate Release

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Johnstown, PA - Congressman John P. Murtha is pleased to invite donors to "his place" for a blood drive next week.

No, not his actual home; the drive will take place at the John P. Murtha Donor Pavilion, located at the Greater Alleghenies Region, American Red Cross Blood Services, 250 Jari Drive in Johnstown on Wednesday, April 19, from noon to 6:00 p.m.

Congressman Murtha encourages local community members to follow his lead by donating blood.

"The simple act of giving blood is a heroic act that saves an estimated 4.5 million lives a year,' Murtha said. "I encourage area residents to take a few minutes during this drive to give the 'gift of life' and help ensure a secure, sustained blood supply for the Greater Alleghenies Region."

"With the coming of nicer weather, donor turnout tends to decrease causing our blood supplies to drop below the level we would like to have," commented Taunia Oechslin, Senior Director, Donor Recruitment at the Greater Alleghenies Region. "Specifically, supplies of type O negative blood, which are typically in critical need, are at even lower supplies due to the constant demand regional hospitals have for this universal blood type."

"We are grateful to Congressman Murtha for giving of his time to support a blood drive," Oechslin stated. "It's important to both the Congressman and the American Red Cross to make sure the blood products needed are always available to hospitals and patients in our communities."

Oechslin explained that Congressman Murtha has been a long-standing Red Cross supporter through the years. In 2005, he championed \$1.9 million in federal funding to provide significant state-of-art information technology upgrades for the Greater Alleghenies Region Blood Services facility.

Individuals may donate whole blood or platelets during the drive. To make a whole blood appointment, donors can call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (800-448-3543) or visit the American Red Cross's website, [www.redcrosslife.org](http://www.redcrosslife.org) . To schedule a platelet apheresis donation, please contact Donna at 1-800-542-5663 ex. 2637.

Individuals in generally good health, who meet the minimum weight and age requirements may be eligible and are encouraged to donate blood. Most people can safely donate every 56 days. Individuals should bring their Red Cross donor cards or other forms of identification to the donor site. For additional information, call (800) GIVE LIFE or visit [www.redcrosslife.org](http://www.redcrosslife.org) .

Local residents and patients are among those served through the Greater Alleghenies Region, which serves hospitals, patients and blood donors in a 100-county area in Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, and also supports blood needs experienced by patients elsewhere in hospitals served through Red Cross Blood Services.