

## CONGRESSMAN DAVIS URGES AFRICAN AMERICANS TO GIVE BLOOD

WASHINGTON, DC (FEBRUARY 16, 2012) - CONGRESSMAN DANNY K. DAVIS Urges Mass Support for Blood Drive

In conjunction with Black History Month, Heartland Blood Centers has joined with Congressman Danny K. Davis and other Westside Black Elected Officials (Alderman Emma Mitts, Chairman) in hosting a blood drive aimed at increasing blood donations among Chicago's African American population. Drive coordinators, Congressman Danny K. Davis and State Representative LaShawn K. Ford, are urging all healthy African Americans to roll up their sleeves and give blood.

Kicking off their "Make Every Drop Count" campaign last month on Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, the Illinois Coalition of Community Blood Centers (ICCBC) and the states' top African American leaders and medical experts gathered in Chicago to create awareness of the need for African American blood donors.

Unfortunately, rare blood traits and certain diseases such as sickle cell anemia, hypertension, lupus and prostate cancer are more prevalent among African Americans. These illnesses often lead to treatments which require regular and frequent blood transfusions.

"African American blood donors provide the best hope for survival of African American patients with these illnesses because their blood proteins are more alike. However, this type of match is extremely limited due to the fact that nationally, African Americans donate less than 1% of the country's blood supply. ICCBC is extremely grateful to the Westside Black Elected Officials, Congressman Danny K. Davis and State Representative LaShawn K. Ford, for helping us turn that trend around in order to improve the quality of and lengthen the lives of so many individuals", said Ann McKanna, Vice President, Heartland Blood Centers and ICCBC President.

"Because African American blood traits are such a "tough match" when it comes to transfusions, it is important that we, as public officials, are able to get the message out that by not donating blood, we as African Americans, are putting each other at risk. With the start of 2012, I ask that becoming a regular blood donor is a New Year's Resolution you stick with, in order to save lives in our community," said Congressman Davis, of the 7th Congressional District. Congressman Davis added, "Giving blood is a great way to celebrate the lives of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dr. Charles Drew, two African Americans who devoted their lives to improving the quality of life for others."

For more information on the blood drive, please [click here](#).