



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

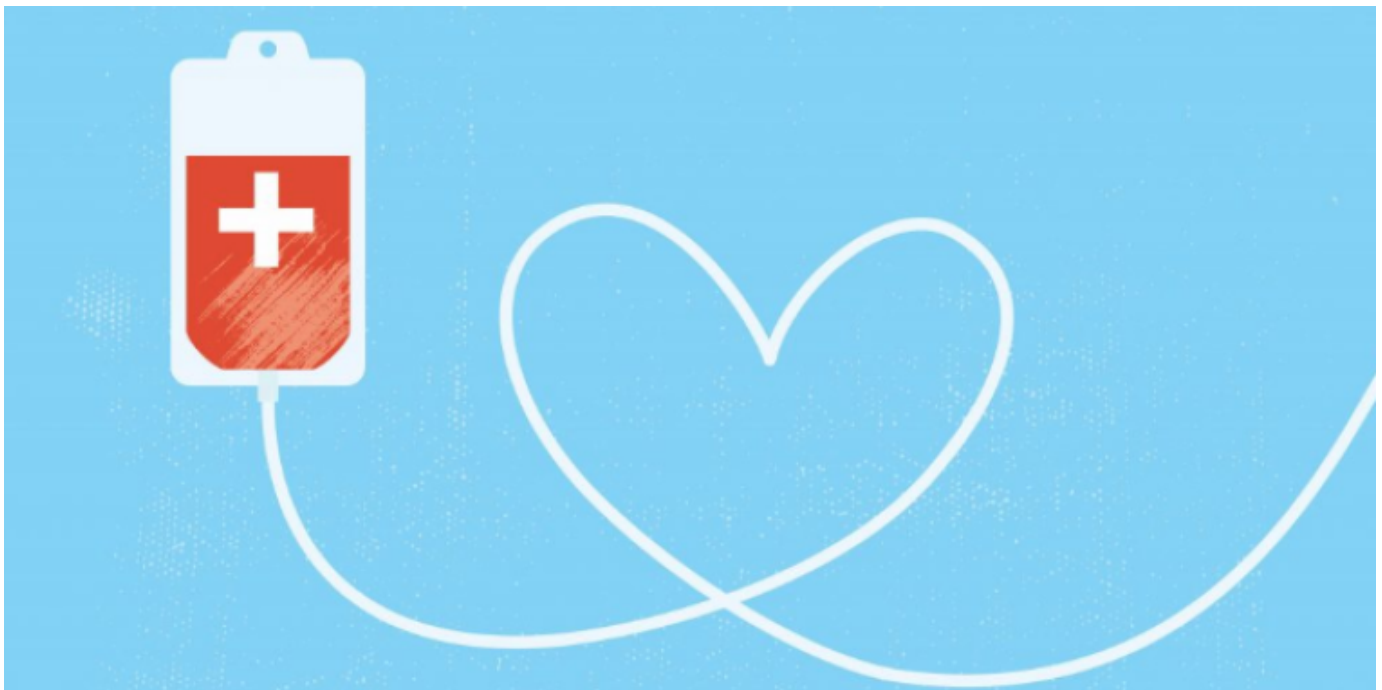
This January, Save a Life by Donating Blood

Senator Patty Ritchie

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

As we usher in the New Year here in Central and Northern New York, winter is just getting started. As such, the area's need for blood donation grows. That is one of the reasons why January is recognized as National Blood Donor Month—a time when we work to raise awareness of the increased need for blood donations and to help people understand just how easy it can be to save a life.

It is estimated that the American Red Cross needs 13,000 donations a day to maintain its blood supply. With its current number of donors, it relies on someone giving blood every eight weeks. Therefore, during this National Blood Donor Month, I am encouraging people to spread the word about blood donation because the reality is, every few seconds another person in our country is in need of blood. Without the generosity of the roughly 6.8 million Americans who donate blood annually, over 4.5 million people would lose their lives every year.

There are so many reasons to become a donor, but here are some of the most important:

- Three lives can be potentially saved with one pint of donated blood;
- Only 10 percent of the eligible 38 percent of Americans who can donate actually do;
- Donating blood can give you medical information about infectious diseases and help save your own life;
- It takes just 10 minutes to donate a pint of blood—and that pint can be used to save up to three lives;
- Blood donors are 88 percent less likely to suffer from a heart attack.

Most blood donations made through the Red Cross are collected through mobile blood drives set up within local communities. In January alone, there will be more than two dozen blood drives in Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties.

Even if you cannot donate blood, you can still help out by volunteering at a blood drive, making a financial donation or helping raise awareness about local blood drives through social media.

For more information on the critical need for more blood donors and upcoming blood drives, please visit the American Red Cross website at www.redcross.org/give-blood and be part of the effort to save lives this winter.