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SANBS CEO, DR JONATHAN LOUW, DONATES COVID-19 CONVALESCENT PLASMA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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With the SARS-CoV-2 infection (COVID-19) now being a part of our reality, the focus is increasingly starting to move towards the development of effective treatments and cures for the virus. One of these therapies currently in development is convalescent plasma. The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) is at the forefront of this therapy in South Africa, currently participating in the collection of convalescent plasma for a national trial.

Heeding the call issued by the SANBS for convalescent plasma, Dr Jonathan Louw, the SANBS Chief Executive Officer has become one of the first people to donate convalescent plasma. Following what he called a “tough infection, coupled with a history of chronic asthma,” he is happy to have been able to make a full recovery following his intense battle with the infection.

Dr Louw was one of the early contractors of the COVID-19 virus in the country. Having made a full recovery, he reflected on the effects of the diagnosis, “I had to go to hospital a couple of times. I was isolated from family for a very long period. It has been a long journey but I’m really hoping that this disease will have a cure soon,” he added.

In the fight against COVID-19, the SANBS is one of a few international blood transfusion services embarking on this exciting research to determine if convalescent plasma, collected from recovered COVID-19 individuals, may help patients hospitalised with COVID-19. Currently there is no proven treatment to improve the outcome for these patients. Convalescent plasma may potentially be one of the only treatment options that works, however this needs to be tested in clinical trials. A convalescent plasma donation is just like a standard plasma donation, the key difference being the need for a specific type of donor.

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Universal Blood Type



Donates to Everyone

Receives from 



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"I've been a regular donor for many years and through my convalescent plasma that is full of antibodies, I hope I can help someone else," Louw concluded.

The SANBS is well positioned to collect this product as we already collect a similar product, source plasma, daily. We have written two research protocols, one to collect the plasma and one to issue the plasma to patients enrolled in a randomised phase 2 placebo-controlled blinded clinical trial. This is yet another area where we can be trusted to save lives.

- ENDS -

About the SANBS

The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) is an independent non-profit organisation, and one of the leaders in the discipline of blood transfusion. SANBS operates in eight out of nine provinces in South Africa (with the exception of the Western Cape, which is serviced by the Western Province Blood Transfusion Service). It also provides crucial support to countries in the SADC region.

SANBS supplies over one million blood products annually and is rated among the top blood services in the world. This pedigree comes, as a result of world-class testing and collection protocols which ensure that the blood which is transfused is always of top quality.

The blood is processed into its constituent components; red blood cells, plasma and platelets therefore in principle a single blood donation can save a minimum of three lives.

