

# *Someone's **life** depends on **YOU.***

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## **History of Virginia Blood Services**

By 1973, the Richmond Academy of Medicine had become alarmed about the safety and availability of blood for Richmond hospital patients. For years Richmond hospitals had obtained their blood from a number of sources of varying safety and reliability. Some of these sources provided blood donated by volunteers; others were commercial operations that paid people for their blood.

Blood from volunteers was considered safer but was frequently scarce; blood from commercial sources was more available but had become well-documented as being likely to transmit hepatitis.

With the goal of improving the safety and reliability of the blood supply, the Academy appointed John L. Thornton, M.D., a clinical pathologist at Johnston-Willis Hospital, to chair a committee to explore establishing the community's first blood center. The committee enlisted the support of hospital pathologists and the three area chapters of the American Red Cross.

As a result of the Academy committee's work, Richmond Metropolitan Blood Service (RMBS) was incorporated on January 11, 1974, as a nonprofit corporation established to collect, process, test and distribute blood for Richmond hospital patients. Its goal was to furnish blood to Richmond hospitals *from volunteers only* by 1975 and that goal was reached.

Today, RMBS is called Virginia Blood Services and it still serves all Richmond hospitals as well as those in Charlottesville, Emporia, Farmville, Harrisonburg (through its RMH Blood Center division), Hopewell, Petersburg, South Hill and the Staunton/Waynesboro area.

