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## Media Alert

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**For Immediate Release**

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## Red Cross Responds To Massive Winter Storms

*Disaster relief funds strained from busy winter; blood donors still needed*

**Hyannis, MA February 4, 2011** — At the height of this week's storms, the American Red Cross was on the ground in 19 states, offering food, comfort and a safe place to stay to people affected by the massive winter storm which buried the country in ice and snow from the Rocky Mountains to Maine.

As of Thursday morning, 82 shelters were open in eight states, with additional shelters on standby. In Chicago alone, more than 360 people spent the night in Red Cross shelters. In Tulsa, Red Cross disaster workers housed almost 70 people overnight who could not make it home due to the storm. Five Red Cross disaster warehouses are on alert, ready to ship supplies to where they are needed to help people in the path of this huge winter storm.

Throughout eastern Massachusetts, no specific Red Cross assistance was requested for this round of winter storms, but staff remained on alert and worked closely with MEMA to monitor sheltering needs. Since the storm ended, the Red Cross has been following up on roof collapses that may have affected area residents.

"This week's storm was just part of a record month," said Bob Wortman, Chief Emergency Services Officer for the American Red Cross of Eastern Massachusetts. "*Since the Christmas weekend storm when we opened four shelters, we have responded to almost 47 house fires, providing assistance to 261 people. Our disaster funds are strained to the limit.*" Last year, the region responded to 420 emergencies and provided assistance to over 800 families.

Glen Beasley, Executive Director of the Cape Cod and Islands Chapter adds: "*Our services are free of charge and we rely 100 percent on donations. When we are called to help, we respond, no matter what economic effects are felt here behind the scenes.*"

If someone wants to help people affected by the storm or those affected by the thousands of disasters across the country and around the world, they can visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org), call 1-800-RED CROSS, or text the word REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation. Contributions may also be sent to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013.

### **Blood Donors Still Needed**

Yesterday alone resulted in 6,200 uncollected units in New England and the upper midwest. Since January 1, winter storms have forced cancellations of over 750 blood drives across the country, resulting in a shortfall of 28,500 units of blood and platelet donations. The Red Cross urges people who are eligible to schedule an appointment to give blood now.

People can schedule their donation by calling 1-800-RED CROSS or visiting [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org). All blood types are needed, but there is a special need for donors with O-Negative, A-Negative and B-Negative blood. To give blood, someone must be 17 years of age or older (16 with parental permission in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and be in generally good health. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements. Individuals should bring their Red Cross blood donor card or other form of positive ID when coming to donate.

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