



Vitruvian Health

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INFORMATION

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Hamilton EMS launches blood transfusion program for trauma patients

DALTON, Ga. (January 12, 2026) – Hamilton Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) is now equipped to administer blood to patients facing life-threatening blood loss on their way to the hospital.

“Severe bleeding is the leading cause of preventable death in trauma,” said Scott Radeker, EMS director. “If we can get blood into patients sooner, we can save lives that might otherwise be lost before they ever reach the hospital.”

Trauma patients who need and receive blood before reaching the hospital are four times more likely to survive and require 60 percent less blood during subsequent transfusions, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says.

Since HEMS launched its blood transfusion program on Dec. 1, two patients received pre-hospital transfusions. The HEMS blood program is a partnership with Hamilton Medical Center’s Blood Bank and allows specially trained paramedics to carry and administer blood products, including packed red blood cells, liquid plasma or whole blood. Administration is generally limited to patients at least 1 year old who have life-threatening blood loss, whether through injuries or medical conditions.

Adverse reactions to transfusions are rare but can be treated by paramedics. Additionally, patients receive only transfusions considered safest for all blood types — packed red blood cells, liquid plasma, or low-titer type O-positive or O-negative whole blood. Patients are allowed to refuse blood transfusions.

HEMS paramedics are required to complete additional training in blood product storage, product management, administration and post-resuscitation care as approved by the Georgia Office of EMS and Trauma.

The HEMS blood program is both lifesaving and uncommon. Less than 1 percent of 911 ground EMS agencies have successfully implemented pre-hospital blood transfusion programs. Radeker said this program is a step toward saving lives.

"This gives our paramedics another critical tool in the moments that matter most," Radeker said. "For patients with severe blood loss, those minutes can be the difference between life and death."

Blood supplies depend on volunteer donors. Those wishing to donate through Blood Assurance can specify they are supporting HEMS. The Dalton Blood Donation Center is located at 785 Shugart Road, Suite 5.

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Photo: William Mantooth, HEMS lieutenant, with the new blood transfusion unit.

About Hamilton Medical Center

The flagship affiliate for Vitruvian Health's Northwest Georgia region, Hamilton Medical Center (HMC) is a 255-bed regional acute-care hospital that offers major medical, surgical and diagnostic services, including accredited stroke and chest pain centers. Advanced technology and wellness are two significant areas of focus for HMC. Services include the freestanding Hamilton Ambulatory Surgery Center, Hamilton Diagnostics Center, and Bradley Wellness Center, as well as a Level II trauma center, Peeples Cancer Institute, Heart & Vascular program (including open heart surgery), Hamilton Spine Health and Sport, Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, and more.