



Photo caption: SLETS employees in front of special critical care transport (CCT) ambulances equipped for whole blood transfusion. Chris Zukowski is second from left.

St. Luke's Ambulances Save Lives with Whole Blood

By Sam Kennedy

In recent months, St. Luke's ambulances equipped with whole blood have saved numerous lives, including car accident survivors and a gunshot victim.

Whole blood is a powerful, lifesaving tool because, unlike IV fluid, it contains vital components – red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets and plasma, explained Chris Zukowski, MSN, RN, of St. Luke's Emergency and Transport Services (SLETS).

"Communities served by St. Luke's ambulances with whole blood are incredibly fortunate, because it is a real game-changer for first-responders," he said. "Most other ambulance corps do not have the sophisticated equipment and advanced training to administer whole blood transfusion."

In July 2024, SLETS became one of the region's first ambulance services to carry whole blood on its special critical care transport (CCT) ambulances, initially for the transport of patients between Network hospitals.

But as the recent life-saving examples illustrate, SLETS ambulances in Monroe, Bucks and Lehigh counties are now also using whole blood, when necessary, to save people's lives before they reach the hospital.

This development follows a recent change in Pennsylvania regulations allowing general paramedics—those found on traditional ambulances—to be trained and certified to administer whole blood. (St. Luke's Dr. Bryan Wilson, who helped draft the new protocol, leads a St. Luke's EMS Physician Response Team that also administers a prehospital whole blood transfusion. See www.slhn.org/blog/2025/new-state-protocol-drafted-by-slhn-doc-saves-lives.)

"If ambulances don't have whole blood and they respond to a scene, like a horrible accident on I-78, responders can apply a tourniquet and administer IV fluids – but those measures don't have oxygen-carrying capabilities," Zukowski said. "Providing whole blood at the scene of an accident helps to stabilize patients until we can get them to one of trauma centers."

Jobs Available with PennDOT's Winter Maintenance Program

By Senator Rosemary Brown

The coming end of summer means job opportunities for those with the skills to maintain and clear Pennsylvania's roadways in the winter with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT).

Positions and hourly pay include CDL equipment operator (\$23), dispatcher (\$17.38), diesel and automotive mechanic (\$24.97 – \$28.37 based on title), tradesman helper and semi-skilled laborer (\$18.46), and more.

These temporary positions could be a pathway to a permanent PennDOT career. You can find more background information and links to job openings here



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