



March 13, 2026

## Health Coalition demands disclosures & end to Grifols' for-profit blood plasma contract following reports of deaths, harm, non-compliance

Toronto – The Ontario and Manitoba Health Coalitions held a press conference this morning to respond to a [report from CBC](#) about two patients who died in Winnipeg after having their blood plasma harvested at centres owned by for-profit pharmaceutical corporation Grifols. [Another report followed, of a man who is suing](#), alleging kidney damage from equipment failure while having his plasma harvested at a Grifols centre. The Alberta Friends of Medicare [revealed that Grifols has been found non-compliant](#) with serious breaches at their Calgary centre. Inspection reports from Health Canada show that four Grifols centres have been found non-compliant in [Calgary](#), Alberta; [St. John](#), New Brunswick; and [Regina](#) and [Saskatoon](#), Saskatchewan.

The Ontario Health Coalition supported the Manitoba Health Coalition's call today for a judicial inquest in Manitoba which would result in investigations that are independent of Health Canada and Canadian Blood Services (CBS).

In addition, the Ontario Health Coalition called for:

- CBS to disclose the terms of the contract between CBS and Grifols
- Health Canada and CBS to report what, if any, the consequences have been for Grifols for non-compliance, disclosure of the full compliance reports, and any other adverse events that have occurred for people whose plasma has been harvested at Grifols centres
- Health Canada to disclose whether the Ontario Grifols centres have been inspected since they have opened and begun operating
- Health Canada to disclose the frequency of plasma harvesting for the people who have died.

The Ontario Health Coalition also called for Canadian Blood Services to end its contract with Grifols and expand the voluntary public donation system.

"We do not allow for-profit companies to harvest human organs and sell them. It crosses a moral line that is held for good reason. Commodification results in unacceptable exploitation, harm, safety issues and inequities," said Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition. "The same principle applies to human blood. We are calling on our provincial government, CBS and Health Canada to expand and protect the voluntary public blood - and plasma - donation system."

"The inspection reports showing non-compliance at Grifols' centres are shocking," said Geoff Cain, volunteer co-chair of the Coalition's Committee to Protect Ontario's Blood System. Geoff worked at Canadian Blood Services and is now retired. "The findings are deeply troubling. They show fail after fail after fail."

Under Ontario's Liberal government in 2014, advocates for a safe public blood supply won [legislation to ban paid plasma](#). The ban is in keeping with the recommendations of the [Krever Commission](#) into the tainted blood scandal that resulted in the deaths of approximately 8,000 people. The *Voluntary Blood Donations Act* has an exception that allows Canadian Blood Services (CBS), the non-profit that manages the blood system in Canada outside of Quebec, to pay "donors" if needed.

However, there is no clause in the legislation that enables CBS to contract a for-profit corporation to do so, Cain noted, and the exception for CBS was made so that in time of crisis CBS could pay for blood.

“That is not the case now,” he said. “There is no agency clause that allows Canadian Blood Services to contract a for-profit pharmaceutical company to buy and sell blood products. The Ford government must comply with the law and stop for-profit paid plasma.”

Despite the *Voluntary Blood Donations Act*, in 2022, CBS signed a 15-year contract with Grifols and the Ford government has allowed them to set up paid plasma centres in Ontario. [Health Coalitions across Canada opposed the contract](#) and called for the voluntary public donation system to be expanded and protected. Nevertheless, Health Canada approved Grifols to take plasma from a single donor as often as 104 times per year -- double the frequency that CBS is allowed to take blood.

Sara Labelle, a medical laboratory technologist and volunteer co-chair with Cain of the Health Coalition’s committee described the process for harvesting plasma. Blood is taken from the “donor”, the plasma is removed and the red and white blood cells and platelets are returned into the person’s blood stream. She noted that donating plasma is safe but large studies raise concerns about frequent taking of plasma which includes iron and immunoglobulins along with other proteins and nutrients. “The evidence raises concerns for the very frequent removal of plasma, and that would be compounded for people who are poor and less healthy.”

“We don’t allow for-profit companies to buy and sell kidneys to make money,” concluded Labelle. “When there is a shortage, the solution is a public campaign to get workplaces to arrange donation drives, and public advertising and education.”

Grifols has been advertising in Ontario that people can make \$6,890 per year for "donating" plasma. They are [giving bonuses to people who donate very frequently](#). Cain, who has spoken to people going into Grifols collection centres, found that they are low income and desperate, selling their plasma for money, not altruism or patient need. His findings are supported by [media investigations](#) into the centres.

Prior to the opening of the Canadian for-profit plasma centres, Grifols was controversial for [setting up collection centres near the Mexican border in Texas](#), close to where low income people work in maquiladoras on the Mexican side. They got day passes to cross the border to go to plasma collection sites where they sold their blood products for money.

The U.S. has allowed very frequent harvesting of plasma, and Canada has followed suit. This is not the case in a number of European countries and a 2024 meta-analysis has prompted calls for a precautionary approach noting that the high frequency approach may have negative health impacts for “donors”.