

## Managing donor collections during the COVID-19 pandemic

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The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the cell therapy industry in unprecedented ways. For many companies operating within the field, logistical challenges are no longer the exception, but the norm. Collection from allogeneic donors represents a particular set of issues – donors must often fly to apheresis or marrow collection centers, the majority of which are in hospitals that may be treating coronavirus patients. Donor materials may then need to travel globally, in the care of couriers, to reach the patient in a timely fashion.

Be The Match BioTherapies (BTMB) is successfully navigating the obstacles presented by the current pandemic, and continuing to isolate and transport healthy donor starting material. This has been achieved by focusing on maintenance of a robust donor network and supply chain, while centering the safety of donors, couriers and patients.

### MODIFYING THE DONATION PROCESS

While people remain willing to donate during the COVID-19 pandemic, some are reluctant to travel far from home. To address this issue, donor material was collected sooner, and in a more regional way. BTMB's expansive network made it possible for donors to donate closer to their homes, and using this approach the distance travelled was reduced by 30%. Modified donor screening and collection processes were also introduced to minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19.

### OVERCOMING COURIER OBSTACLES

The difficulties posed by travel restrictions, and considerations for couriers who were clinically vulnerable to coronavirus infection, necessitated the replacement of over 100 couriers early in the pandemic. Over 60% of the shipments managed by BTMB have a global aspect, and issues such as border closures also had to be navigated. Supply chain complexities included an 80% reduction in courier availability and an 80% reduction in available flights.

A worldwide effort between BTMB and its partners was made in order to continue to successfully deliver time- and temperature-sensitive therapies across borders to different countries around the world. BTMB also obtained a US CDC travel ban waiver in order to allow foreign nationals to deliver products into the US on the company's behalf.

### CENTERING THE PATIENT

Transplant centers began evaluating patients on a case-by-case basis in order to determine if a transplant is in the patient's best interests, or if the potential health risk is currently too high. This allowed patients to be prioritized correctly.

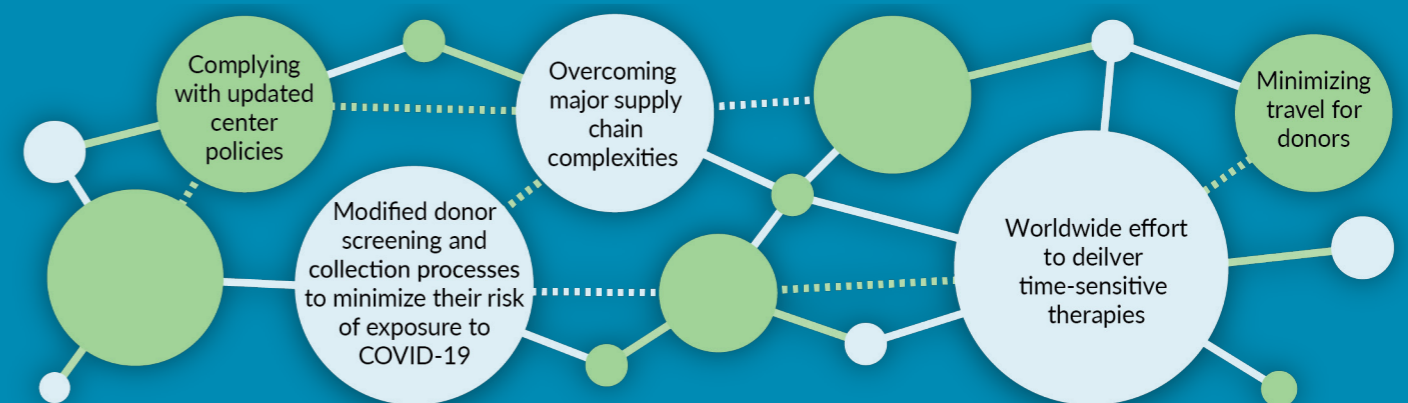
At the start of the pandemic, cryopreservation was made a requirement for all of BTMB's transplant product. This provided the flexibility to collect material when the donor is available, while still managing transport considerations and allowing for the possibility that the intended recipient could then develop a COVID infection and be unable to receive the cells. Additionally,

physicians do not start the required preparatory regimen until the cells arrive.

### AN EVOLVING APPROACH

A broad donor registry and wide network of collection centers allows for a robust supply chain during difficult situations such as the current pandemic, and this has enabled BTMB to continue to collect required cellular starting material in a safe manner.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, so will BTMB's approach. A cross-functional emergency response and preparedness team has been mobilized, and regular communication with customers and partners is ongoing to ensure materials can be delivered where they are needed in a way that minimizes risk. BTMB is also continuing to work with global partners to ensure alignment on key decisions, and to remain up to date on the ever-changing global landscape.



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