The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is asking Americans who have recovered from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) to donate their blood plasma to help fight the pandemic.

Convalescent plasma has antibodies to COVID-19 and could be used to make treatments for severely ill COVID-19 patients, FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn, M.D., explained. "Prior experience with respiratory viruses and limited data that have emerged from China suggest that convalescent plasma has the potential to lessen the severity or shorten the length of illness caused by COVID-19," Hahn said in an agency news release. "It is important that we evaluate this potential therapy in the context of clinical trials, through expanded access, as well as facilitate emergency access for individual patients, as appropriate."

The FDA recently outlined its efforts to work with partners in government, academic centers, and industry to develop and provide patients with convalescent plasma products. But the effort...