



NEWS RELEASE

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ABC and NMDP Partner to Meet Growing Need for Stem Cell and Cord Blood Transplants, Assure Funding for Cord Blood Network, Encourage Minority Donor Recruitment

WASHINGTON (March 21, 2008) – America's Blood Centers (ABC), a Washington, DC-based association representing community, independent blood centers, has teamed up with the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) to educate lawmakers about the importance of stem cells and cord blood as life-saving treatment options and the need to fully fund the nation's cord blood network.

ABC and NMDP also have agreed to collaborate on emerging regulatory issues, standards/accreditation and developing new outreach programs to help meet the growing need for adult stem cells and cord blood units from minority donors.

ABC's not-for-profit members provide half the U.S. blood supply; NMDP helps patients obtain cord blood, bone marrow, and peripheral blood stem cells for life-saving transplants. (ABC's Canadian members supply all the blood and manage the stem cell donor registries in the Provinces.)

This new partnership builds on current collaborations between the two organizations; 39 ABC member centers currently recruit about 30 percent of the adult donors listed on the NMDP Registry and more than half of ABC centers perform peripheral blood stem cell collections, many for transplant from unrelated donors coordinated by NMDP. Eight ABC centers also collect and store cord blood units, many of which are listed on the NMDP Registry.

"We are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with NMDP to expand the network of public cord blood banks with the goal of increasing the quantity and racial diversity of donated cord blood to help more patients with life-threatening diseases," said ABC CEO Jim MacPherson. "As federally licensed facilities that practice current good manufacturing practices, blood centers are a great fit for helping to manage the rapidly increasing needs of cellular therapies. The success of the cord blood network is critical to conquering many fatal cancers and genetic diseases like sickle cell anemia. The numbers of patients using blood and getting stem cell and cord blood transplants are increasing, and the U.S. is becoming a minority majority country. ABC and NMDP share the goal of assuring that the right cord blood and cells are there when needed."

Jeffrey W. Chell, MD, CEO of NMDP, expressed thanks for ABC's willingness to support public policies that promote the expansion of cord blood banks and collection of cord blood units. "We would like to make cord blood collection and facilities and their procedures as consistent as possible from state to state, and in full compliance with federal requirements and industry standards. That will take a concerted

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effort, model legislation and consistent federal funding. We are confident ABC can help us in these key areas, as well as build grass-roots support for this very worthy cause.”

In 2006, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded contracts to NMDP to operate the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program. This includes serving as the nation’s Cord Blood Coordinating Center, which ensures the availability of cord blood units collected and increases the diversity of the National Cord Blood Inventory (NCBI). The objective of the NCBI is to increase the inventory by 150,000 cord blood units. Three ABC members – New York Blood Center, South Texas Blood and Tissue Center, and Puget Sound Blood Center – have received HRSA grants to increase their cord inventories. Several other ABC members have been applicants or hope to be recipients of future grants.

Through this partnership, ABC and NMDP will seek to educate patients, physicians, and families about federal and state policies related to cord blood collection, maintenance, and availability through the NCBI, as well as issues related to the continuation of the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program. In addition, ABC and NMDP are working together to expand the nationwide network of centers that can collect peripheral blood stem cells from donors matched to recipients in need of a transplant, and looking at the feasibility of piloting a program to recruit and expand the donation of umbilical cords from minority donors within ABC’s network of blood banks. Both ABC and NMDP have minority donor initiatives and will be sharing best practices that can be applied at the local level to increase blood donations and minority donors for stem cells and cords.

About Cord Blood

Today, advances in umbilical cord blood transplantation are making it possible to meet the needs of more seriously ill patients, and especially those from diverse racial and ethnic communities. Since 2004, the number of cord blood transplants facilitated by the NMDP has nearly doubled each year. In 2007, nearly one in five transplants facilitated by the NMDP used cord blood. The NMDP expects these numbers to continue to grow, providing increased access to cord blood for any patient who needs a transplant.

About America’s Blood Centers

Founded in 1962, America’s Blood Centers is North America’s largest network of community-based blood programs. Recognized by the U.S. Congress for its critical work in patient care and disaster preparedness and response, the federation of 77 blood centers together operates more than 600 collection sites in 45 U.S. states and Canada, providing half of the U.S., and all of the Canadian volunteer donor blood supply. These blood centers serve an area with more than 180 million people and provide blood products and services to more than 4,200 hospitals and healthcare facilities across North America. ABC’s U.S. members are licensed and regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Canadian members are regulated by Health Canada.

About the National Marrow Donor Program®

The National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) operates the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program authorized by the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005. In passing this law, Congress recognized the promise of cord blood to many searching patients, in particular minority patients who are more likely to find a matched donor from donated cord blood. Today, the Registry is one of the most successful public-private partnerships in the federal government, serving as a single point of access for patients in need of a life- saving transplant via the Bone Marrow Coordinating Center, Cord Blood Coordinating Center and the Office of Patient Advocacy operated by the NMDP. Since its inception in 1987, the NMDP has provided transplants for more than 30,000 patients. Learn more about the National Marrow Donor Program at www.marrow.org or call 1 (800) MARROW-2.

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