

14 March, 2007

State of Connecticut General Assembly  
Committee on Public Health  
Legislative Office Building  
300 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Members of the Committee on Public Health:

My name is Vicki Connors and I have worked for the American Red Cross and National Marrow Donor Program since 1991.

Public Act 06-77 established an ad hoc committee to examine and evaluate the feasibility of 3 points:

- (1) Establishing a public umbilical cord blood bank for the purpose of collecting and storing umbilical cord blood and placental tissue donated by maternity patients at hospitals licensed in this state
- (2) Entering into a multi-state public umbilical cord collaboration
- (3) Developing a public-private partnership with existing umbilical cord blood banks.

I have been involved with this committee and have attended meetings since July 18, 2006. The need for increased racial and ethnic diversity of the cord blood supply was reviewed at length both in terms of the CT population and the national cord blood supply.

The umbilical cord and placenta are known to contain adult stem cells that can be used to provide a life saving stem cell transplant for patients with malignancies. Some of the benefits of a Cord Blood Collection and Storage Program include:

\*Ease of collection

- \*Less need for an identical tissue match between donor and patient
- \*Permits ethnic and other minorities to access adult stem cells for a life saving transplant
- \*Cord Blood transplants are successful for both adults and children

The proposed Connecticut bill encourages regional collaboration with existing cord blood banks to ensure access to public cord blood banking. The state of Connecticut should be coordinated with a national program such as the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program.

Many other states have created public cord blood banks and several others are considering cord blood banks in their own states. Since nongovernmental entities have already created expertise and capacity for public banking, the state could avoid the cost and risk but still accommodate the desire for public banking within the state through a public-private partnership. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Vicki Connors  
National Marrow Donor Program  
[www.marrow.org](http://www.marrow.org)