

March 14 / 2007 Connecticut Legislators:

Thank you very much for letting me speak here today. My name is Danny Lemos and in Jan of 2005 I was diagnosed with an aggressive form of Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

The Doctors told me that it was a curable form of cancer if I can find a Stem Cell bone marrow match. My Doctors wanted me to undergo a bone marrow transplant asap but no one in my family was a match. I found out that a person has only a 30 % chance to find a suitable match from a family member. The other 70 % are on their own and hope to get lucky to find a possible donor in one of the marrow registries.

Because there are so few people registered as possible adult stem cell donors. I have not yet been able to find a match. The only hope for many people like me may be using stem cells from a woman's umbilical cord. Research has shown very good results from transplants using Stem Cells from Cord Blood.

Please understand that this is not the controversial embryonic stem cells. Cord Blood Stems are taken from a woman's umbilical cord that would otherwise be thrown away.

The problem is that these cells still have to match your own HLA type and there are very few cords saved in this country. So at the moment there are no cords that match my HLA type. We throw away millions of potential life saving umbilical cords in this country every year. The State of Connecticut needs to open up a cord blood bank and make it possible for any woman that wants to donate their cord blood can do so easily. Thousands of people die each year while waiting to find stem cell matches in this country. I know I think about how many umbilical cords are thrown away each day that could save my life and the lives of thousands of other cancer patients.

Please open a cord blood bank or work with an existing bank to allow these cords to be tested and possibly saved .

Thank you again for your time.

Daniel Lemos  
Fairfield CT.