

Dear Senator Jonathan Harris, Representative Elizabeth Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee,

We would like to take this time to whole heartedly express our support of section 5 of CT Bill 678 – requiring any “physician or other health care provider who provides health care services to a pregnant woman during the last trimester of her pregnancy, which health care services are directly related to her pregnancy, shall provide the woman with timely, relevant and appropriate information sufficient to allow her to make an informed and voluntary choice regarding options to bank or donate umbilical cord blood following the delivery of a newborn child.”

Unfortunately, our first born daughter, Kacey Rose, was diagnosed with AML-M7 at 16 ½ months old. The only reason we became aware that donating umbilical cord blood was an option, was because Kacey needed a transplant but did not have an eligible match in the entire national bone marrow registry. As an alternative, her doctors searched for stem cells stored in public cord blood banks. Receiving a stem cell transplant was the only option to cure Kacey’s rare form of pediatric cancer.

Fortunately, a useable match had been found in the public cord blood bank which had been donated 7 years earlier. My daughter received her transplant, using the cells wisely donated by someone who was informed that this option was available.

The stem cells painlessly collected from the umbilical cord shortly after birth offer a viable alternative to anyone requiring a Bone Marrow transplant who is unable to find a suitable match or donor.

There are well over 10 million people registered as bone marrow donors but well under 100,000 publicly available cord blood units.

We believe that providing accurate information and fully informing pregnant mothers of the option to publically donate will dramatically boost the number of publically available cord blood units.

Stem Cell transplantation is a proven part of the treatment protocol for many diseases, not just cancers. Having more publically available cord blood units will increase the potential match for someone in need of stem cells when a bone marrow donor is not an option.

Who knows....you or someone you love may be one day faced with one of the ailments that requires a stem cell transplant as we were. Imagine the relief of hearing “there is no match for a bone marrow donor but we have 1 or 2 terrific cord blood unit matches available to use” as we did.

Thank you for your consideration,

Glen & Kristina Mitchell
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