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The Honorable Joseph J. Crisco, Co-Chair  
Connecticut State Senate  
The Honorable Steve Fontana, Co-Chair  
Connecticut House of Representatives  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Insurance and Real Estate Committee  
Room 2800, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

February 2, 2009

**Re: Letter of Support for--an Act Concerning Health Insurance Coverage for Bone Marrow Testing (S290)**

Dear Senator Crisco and Representative Fontana:

The National Marrow Donor Program is pleased to support S290. The proposed law would provide coverage of HLA typing for citizens interested in joining the NMDP Donor Registry. HLA typing is used to help determine whether a potential donor on the Registry is a good match for patients in need of a life saving bone marrow transplant. Currently, one of the most significant barriers to adding to the registry is the cost of typing.

On any given day, more than 6,000 men, women and children desperately search the NMDP Registry for a matching bone marrow donor or cord blood unit. These patients may have leukemia, lymphoma and other life-threatening diseases whose only hope for a cure may be a transplant. The proposed law would encourage more donors to join the NMDP Registry increasing the likelihood that more patients will find the match they need.

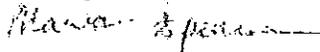
NMDP is a not-for-profit organization operating the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program, created by Congress to support the national Registry which ensures that bone marrow and umbilical cord blood units are available to patients in need of a stem cell transplant. The Program's goal is to meet the access needs of virtually all Americans searching for a donor for transplantation, regardless of their racial or ethnic heritage. Since its inception in 1987, NMDP has provided transplants for more than 30,000 cancer patients.

In passing this law, Connecticut could join several states (Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire and Rhode Island) that require insurance coverage for HLA typing for patients. Though there are six million potential donors on the registry today, we still do not have matched bone marrow donors or cord blood units for all patients. We need more new donors to join the Registry. If passed, this law can help NMDP increase the Registry. As a result, more people will receive a transplant. And more families will have a future filled with hope.

We encourage the General Assembly to pass this bill and look forward to working with you in support of this bill. If you have any additional questions or comments please don't hesitate to contact me directly. I can be reached at 202.626.8668 or via email and [mjspencer@nyghp.org](mailto:mjspencer@nyghp.org).

On behalf of NMDP and searching patients, we thank you for supporting this important initiative

Sincerely,



Maria D. Spencer, Director  
Legislative Relations