

March 16, 2009

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

I would like to take this time to whole heartedly express my 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.”

As a Licensed Practical Nurse, I feel that it is of the utmost importance that patients are educated about their own healthcare options. I am currently in my 1st trimester of my third pregnancy and I have plans to donate my own cord blood upon delivery of my newborn. I have to say that I am surprised and disappointed to know that it is not required that physicians and other healthcare providers of pregnant women inform their patients of ALL of their options regarding cord blood banking. It is such a shame to think of the number of women that may have donated their own cord blood if only they had the knowledge and information they needed to make an educated decision. To know that your baby’s cord blood could possible save another’s life...Most women would be proud to participate.

When I mentioned my desire to donate my cord blood to my practitioner they were unable to provide me with information on public banking. Needless to say, I will have to research this process on my own.

In conclusion, I believe that it is the ethical duty of the members of the medical field to educate their patients and allow them to make informed decisions regarding stem cell donation. Most pregnant women have heard of or even researched private blood banking for their newborn's cord blood; however, most find it too costly to proceed with banking privately.

These women, if educated, may decide that cord blood donation is an alternative rather than just discarding possible life saving stem cells after delivery.

Personally, I hate to think that the stem cells from my 2 previous pregnancies could have saved a life, but instead were thrown away with the trash.

Thank you for your support and consideration of Bill 678.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth McQuatters
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