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The Honorable Russell Morin
Connecticut House of Representatives
Legislative Office Building, Room 2202
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

February 1, 2011

Re: Letter of Support for--An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage for Bone Marrow Testing (HB 5032)

Dear Representative Morin:

The National Marrow Donor Program is pleased to support HB 5032. The proposed law would provide health insurance coverage for expenses arising from HLA typing for citizens interested in joining the national registry, publically known as Be The Match. 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.

Every year, more than 10,000 patients in the U.S. are diagnosed with life-threatening diseases such as leukemia or lymphoma for which a marrow or cord blood transplant from an unrelated donor may be their best or only hope of a cure. The NMDP is a leader in the field of unrelated marrow and umbilical cord blood transplantation, dedicated to creating an opportunity for all patients to receive the transplant therapy they need, when they need it. Since 1987, the NMDP has facilitated more than 40,000 transplants.

In passing this law, Connecticut could join several states (Massachusetts, Missouri, and New Hampshire) that require insurance coverage for HLA typing for patients. Though there are over nine 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 the NMDP increase the registry, resulting in more people receiving a transplant.

We encourage the General Assembly to pass this bill and look forward to working with you in support of this important legislation. 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 at msspencer@nmdp.org.

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

Sincerely,

Maria Spencer

Maria D. Spencer, Director
Legislative Relations