

# **Industry Association Offers Perspective to Expectant Parents and Healthcare Professionals on Informed Choice of Cord Blood Banking**

PR Newswire  
January 4, 2007

Jan. 4 /PRNewswire/ -- Dr. Charles Sims, M.D., chairman of the Association of Family Cord Blood Banks (AFCBB), asserts that all expectant parents should make an informed choice about the storage or disposal of their newborn's cord blood stem cells and that physicians and other pre-natal care providers have a responsibility to provide fair and balanced education on all cord blood banking options. This perspective is consistent with recommendations from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and with legislation being passed in several states across the country.

"For more than a decade, cord blood stem cells have been used successfully to treat broad classes of diseases including genetic, hematologic, immunologic, metabolic and oncologic disorders. In addition, a number of medical research studies suggest that cord blood stem cells may have potential use in regenerative medical therapies, such as treating diabetes, cardiac disease and several neurological disorders," said Sims. "At a time when the cord blood stem cells of 9 out of every 10 babies born in this country are disposed of as medical waste, we have a responsibility to do a better job of educating parents on cord blood preservation, whether for donation or private storage in a family bank. The member companies of AFCBB are committed to providing fair and balanced information to expectant parents."

The AFCBB is encouraged that current and recently revised policy statements recognize the therapeutic value of cord blood stem cells. However, the organization contends that policy statements that discourage family banking in favor of public donation do not appropriately recognize the fundamental tenet of informed choice or provide a balanced perspective on the distinct, scientifically-proven benefits of family cord blood banking.

There is general agreement among transplantation experts that -- all other things being equal -- stem cell transplants from HLA-matched genetically-related sources (those from an immediate family member) are associated with less frequent and less severe graft-versus-host disease; less transplant-related mortality; and superior long-term survival as compared with stem cells that are HLA-matched from an unrelated donor.

"The lifetime likelihood of a person developing a disorder that is treatable by stem cell therapy is likely to increase over the life of that individual, particularly as science advances," said Sims. "Furthermore, regenerative medicine therapies and gene therapy

may require an individual's own stem cells for treatment. In the case of cord blood stem cells, a family has only one chance to store these biologically-unique cells for their future use and they need to have the right information to make this important, one-time decision."

#### About the Association of Family Cord Blood Banks

The Association of Family Cord Blood Banks (AFCBB) is an organization representing the family cord blood banking industry. AFCBB is the voice and advocate for private cord blood banks and strives to educate expectant parents, regulatory agencies, physicians and other healthcare providers about the benefits of banking cord blood as a plausible treatment for many chronic and debilitating diseases. For more information, visit <http://www.afcbb.org/>.