

**BILL ENCOURAGES UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD BANKING  
FOR STEM CELL TREATMENTS  
NOT USING EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS**

On Wednesday, May 27, the Ohio House Health Committee unanimously passed H.B. 102. H.B. 102, which is sponsored by Rep. Todd Book, would require the Ohio Department of Health to place printable materials on its website with information on umbilical cord blood banking and donation. The Department of Health would encourage health care professionals to provide the materials to pregnant women.

**Umbilical cord blood is an excellent and ethical source of stem cells that can be obtained with no risk to the mother or child.** Stem cells derived from umbilical cord blood have been used to successfully treat over 70 diseases including sickle cell anemia, leukemia, and lymphoma. Unfortunately, most umbilical cord blood is currently being discarded after birth.

In May 20th testimony in support of the bill, Ohio Right to Life Legislative Counsel Mark Lally stressed that cord blood is often matched by racial and ethnic background and many patients who are most in need of a transplant cannot find a suitable match. He indicated that **by increasing public awareness of cord blood donation, H.B. 102 should increase the number and diversity of cord blood donations and thus increase the number of patients who can obtain the match they need.**

Also testifying at the May 20th hearing was the Joseph and Darlene Davis family of Texas. Their first son, Joseph, was born with sickle cell anemia. Without a cord blood stem cell transplant, doctors told the couple that Joseph might not survive to his teens. However, as is the case with a majority of African-American patients, a suitable match could not be found for Joseph from existing donations at cord blood banks. Fortunately, Darlene, who had had great difficulty conceiving, unexpectedly became pregnant with their second son, Isaac. **Stem cells from Isaac's cord blood cured Joseph.** The family stressed the importance of informing pregnant women about the options of cord blood banking and donation. [Click here to read their story.](#)

At the same hearing, Dr. Peter Lachiewicz, a Darke County obstetrician, said that cord blood was "liquid gold" that is being thrown out because too few pregnant women are being informed about it.

**Although banking cord blood for personal or family use with a private bank can involve significant expense, donations to public cord blood banks involve no expense for the donor.**

**UPDATE: On Wednesday, June 3, 2009, the Ohio House of Representatives passed H.B. 102 by a vote of 97 to 0.**