State of Arkansas
85th General Assembly
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By: Representatives M. Martin, Elliott

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

ENCOURAGING THE MEMBERS OF THE ARKANSAS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SUPPORT HR 596 TO AMEND THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ACT TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL CORD BLOOD STEM CELL BANK NETWORK TO PREPARE, STORE, AND DISTRIBUTE HUMAN UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD STEM CELLS FOR THE TREATMENT OF PATIENTS AND TO SUPPORT PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH USING THE CELLS.

Subtitle

ENCOURAGING THE ARKANSAS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SUPPORT THE ACT TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL CORD BLOOD STEM CELL BANK NETWORK TO PREPARE, STORE, AND DISTRIBUTE HUMAN UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD STEM CELLS.

WHEREAS, House Resolution 596 was filed on February 2, 2005, in the House of Representatives of the 109th Congress to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a National Cord Blood Stem Cell Bank Network to prepare, store, and distribute human umbilical cord blood stem cells for the treatment of patients and to support peer-reviewed research using the cells; and

WHEREAS, the use of human umbilical cord blood stem cells for treatment and research is distinct from the controversial use of embryonic stem cells for treatment and research; and

WHEREAS, research sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and conducted in full compliance with applicable Food and Drug Administration regulations has demonstrated the feasibility of using cord blood for clinical applications; and stem cells, obtained from the blood contained in the delivered placenta and umbilical cord and donated by the mother, can be used for bone marrow reconstitution by transplantation to recipients with certain malignancies such as leukemia and lymphoma, genetic disorders such as sickle cell anemia, and acquired diseases; and

WHEREAS, the placenta, umbilical cord, and the neonatal blood they contain are normally discarded after childbirth; this residual neonatal blood, termed cord blood, is a source of stem cells that can be collected as donor tissue without risk to the donor and can be preserved through freezing for many years and be made immediately available for transplantation in routine or emergency clinical situations; and scientific research on cord blood stem cells may uncover a potential to treat a wide variety of diseases not yet attempted; and

WHEREAS, advantages of cord blood stem cell transplants include no risk to the donor and reduced risk of certain transplant complications including graft versus host disease and latent virus infections like Epstein-Barr virus or cytomegalovirus and immediate availability of cord blood stem cell units, whenever needed; and

WHEREAS, cord blood gives all patients a chance for a transplant, regardless of their ethnic background; and an ethnically diverse inventory of one hundred fifty thousand (150,000) cord blood stem cell units would help provide appropriate matches for eighty percent (80%) to ninety percent (90%) of patients seeking matched cord blood stem cell transplants; and

WHEREAS, some genetic conditions are more prevalent in members of particular ethnic groups, such as sickle cell anemia, a disease that occurs in one (1) out of five hundred (500) African-American newborns; from early infancy, patients with sickle cell anemia have a high risk of severe or fatal bacterial blood infections; many patients develop painful crises beginning in

infancy and occurring up to twenty (20) times per year; children with recurrent crises, chest syndrome, or strokes are at great risk of dying before the age of twenty (20) years; the median life span of a patient with sickle cell disease is forty-two (42) years, but patients with severe disease in childhood rarely live beyond twenty (20) years; cord blood stem cell transplantation has cured patients with sickle cell anemia; eighty percent (80%) of children transplanted with related cord blood to correct sickle cell anemia or thalassemia were cured in a recently published study; the earlier in the course of severe disease the transplant is performed, the better the outcomes; unrelated cord blood transplants are especially beneficial for African-American and other ethnic minority patients, because cord blood does not have to match as closely as bone marrow; and with an ethnically balanced national cord blood stem cell network of at least one hundred fifty thousand (150,000) units, some eighty percent (80%) to ninety percent (90%) of African-American patients who suffer from sickle cell anemia or other conditions requiring bone marrow replacement would be able to find appropriately matched cord blood stem cells for successful treatment; and

WHEREAS, cord blood is an alternative to bone marrow as a source of stem cells for transplantation; cord blood banks, therefore, serve the same kinds of patients as marrow donor registries; however, its collection, processing, storage and selection for transplant require unique systems and expertise; and

WHEREAS, radiation exposure, from accidents or hostile actions, could cause bone marrow failure in a portion of those exposed and require treatment, including bone marrow reconstitution; and in these cases the rapid availability of frozen cord blood stem cell units may be an important resource to help rescue the victims years later, those who were exposed and survived may incur an increased risk of leukemia or lymphoma, which might also require stem cell transplantation; and

WHEREAS, recent scientific developments suggest that further research on cord blood stem cells may lead to a greater understanding of certain chronic diseases; this research might improve therapies for, and possibly cure, debilitating diseases such as Parkinson’s disease, insulin-dependent

diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancer; and these diseases cause a disproportionately large share of chronic disabilities and account for a large portion of health care expenditures in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the House of Representatives encourages the Arkansas Congressional Delegation to support HR 596,

NOW THEREFORE,
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the House of Representatives of the State of Arkansas encourages the Arkansas Congressional Delegation to support HR 596 to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a National Cord Blood Stem Cell Bank Network to prepare, store, and distribute human umbilical cord blood stem cells for the treatment of patients and to support peer-reviewed research using the cells.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon adoption of this resolution, the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Arkansas shall transmit a copy to each member of the Arkansas Congressional Delegation.