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BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION PROMOTING LIFE-SAVING MEDICAL ADVANCES CLEARS SENATE

*WASHINGTON *- Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), Richard Burr (R-N.C.), Jack Reed (D-R.I.), John Ensign (R-Nev.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), and Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) praised passage of legislation today reauthorizing a law that has brought hope and the promise of life-saving cures to patients suffering from diseases requiring bone marrow and cord blood transplants.

The Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act of 2010 (S. 3751), unanimously approved by the Senate today, reauthorizes the original 2005 act and extends the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation and National Cord Blood Inventory (NCBI) programs through Fiscal Year 2015.

"This bill ensures that medical advances involving bone marrow and cord blood transplants will continue," said *_Sen. Hatch._* "It will literally bring hope and healing to thousands of Americans suffering from disease such as leukemia, sickle cell anemia and Hodgkin's Disease, just to name a few. Patients in need of these transplants deserve nothing less, and this legislation will bring more access to these life-saving treatments."

"Cord blood stem cells and bone marrow are powerful tools that can help save the lives and ease the suffering of thousands of individuals battling debilitating diseases," said *_Sen. Dodd._* "Physicians will now have expanded access to life-saving therapies that can treat and, in some instances, cure these all too prevalent diseases - improving the lives of tens of thousands of patients and their families."

"I am proud to support this life-saving legislation to renew and strengthen our commitment to the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program and the National Cord Blood Inventory and the patients and families it serves," said *_Sen. Burr._* "Although we have made important strides in collecting cord blood for transplantation in recent years, thanks in large part to the groundbreaking work in North Carolina, we must build on these efforts. These programs are saving lives and bringing new hope to families in our state and across the nation. I am hopeful that the House of Representatives will quickly take up this important legislation so we can send it to the President for his signature."

"I am pleased the Senate passed this bill, which builds upon the highly successful National Marrow Donor Program that has been a lifeline for thousands of transplant patients over the last several decades," said *_Sen. Reed._* Today, we are taking a critical step forward in expanding access to lifesaving therapies to millions of patients with conditions that can be treated and even cured with bone marrow or cord blood."

"We need to continue researching and developing new methods that utilize adult stem cells for the treatment of diseases," said *_Sen. Ensign._* "Cord blood stem cells have already proven to be a successful treatment, and this bill will extend federal funding and allow for more cord blood and bone marrow donations and collections. The passing of this legislation in the Senate shows that our fellow colleagues recognize its importance and the great impact it will have on the lives of many."

"Thousands of Minnesotans and Americans suffer from devastating diseases like leukemia and lymphoma, among others," said *_Sen. Franken._* "Procedures like cord blood stem cell and bone marrow transplants help save lives. Since its inception, the National Bone Marrow Donor Program has provided more than 35,000 transplants to these patients and I'm proud that it is based in Minnesota. This bill will ensure that the program remains strong so kids and adults can access these lifesaving therapies when they need them the most."**

"As a physician who has delivered thousands of babies, I am pleased to support the reauthorization of these important programs--particularly the National Cord Blood Inventory which gives mothers the opportunity to donate cord blood to increase the supply of publicly-available cord blood units, " said *_Sen. Coburn, MD._* "I am mindful, however, that the cord blood program has fallen woefully short of its collection goals over the last five years. I am satisfied that the committee has done the proper oversight and implemented needed changes to significantly increase available cord blood units without authorizing any new spending."

*_The legislation requires:

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- * Qualified cord blood banks to develop an annual plan and demonstrate ongoing progress toward achieving self-sufficiency.
- * Cord blood banks to provide a plan on how to increase cord blood collection through novel approaches such as remote collection and help establish or contract with new collection sites.
- * The collection and maintenance of at least 150,000 of high-quality and diverse cord blood units for transplantation through the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program.
- * Further studies and demonstration projects to explore increasing cord blood donation and collection from a genetically diverse population.

* The General Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study on cord blood donation and collection within one year after enactment of S. 3751.

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