



House Clears Cord Blood Research Measure

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CQ TODAY ONLINE NEWS – HEALTH

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The House cleared legislation early Thursday to bolster the collection of cord blood stem cells in an effort to provide life-saving treatment to patients in need of bone marrow and cord blood transplants.

The bill ([S 3751](#)), passed by voice vote, would reauthorize the National Cord Blood Inventory program, which provides grants to public cord blood banks to assist in collecting donated cord blood units, and the [C.W. Bill Young](#) Cell Transplantation Program, which includes a national registry of potential bone marrow donors and donated cord blood units.

About 12,000 people search the national registry every year for a marrow donor or umbilical cord blood unit. According to Dr. Jeffrey W. Chell, CEO of the National Marrow Donor Program, which runs the registry, “The reauthorization will provide us with the opportunity to continue our efforts to increase the number of adult donors and umbilical cord blood units available.”

The bill, a reauthorization of a 2005 law ([PL 109-129](#)), would direct a total of \$53 million per year to the two programs through fiscal 2015. It also would lift the current collection cap of 150,000 new units of cord blood so that additional units could be collected.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee had approved a companion bill ([HR 6081](#)) by voice vote last week.

The Senate passed the bill by voice vote on Tuesday.

Stem cells from cord blood can be used to treat leukemia, certain lymphomas and other diseases. Their use for medical purposes is not controversial — the stem cells are retrieved from the umbilical cord and placenta after childbirth, not from embryos — and lawmakers from both parties have praised the legislation.

“Not only has God in his wisdom and goodness created the placenta and umbilical cord to nurture and protect the life of an unborn child but another gift awaits us immediately after birth, something very special is very left behind, cord blood that is teeming with life saving stem cells,” said [Christopher H. Smith](#), R-N.J. “It remains one of the best kept secrets in America that umbilical and stem cells in general are curing people of terrible conditions and diseases.”

“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,” said bill sponsor [Orrin G. Hatch](#), R-Utah. “Patients in need of these transplants deserve nothing less, and this legislation will bring more access to these life-saving treatments.”

Source: **CQ Today Online News**

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