



Pioneering Initiative Will Enable Children Born at Risk for Brain Injuries to Participate in Medical Research Using Cord Blood Stem Cells

Newborn Possibilities Program will help accelerate FDA-approved studies for treating cerebral palsy

Tucson, Ariz. – February 22, 2010 – For every 1,000 children born in the U.S. today, two to three are at risk for developing cerebral palsy because of injuries to the brain that may have occurred prior to or during birth. There is currently no cure for cerebral palsy, but Newborn Possibilities is a first-of-its-kind program recently launched in Tucson, which may offer new options for newborns at-risk for neurological injury.

The goal of Newborn Possibilities is to ensure that the cord blood stem cells of children born at-risk for developing cerebral palsy are preserved, so that if a child is diagnosed with the condition, he or she may be eligible to receive a new treatment being researched under approval from the FDA using the child's own cord blood stem cells. The program is being jointly launched in Tucson by Cord Blood Registry, the world's largest stem cell bank; Save the Cord Foundation, a nonprofit advocacy organization based in Tucson; Tucson Medical Center, the region's leading birthing hospital; and Watching Over Mothers and Babies Foundation (WOMB), a local non-profit research foundation.

The program, which provides cord blood banking services through Cord Blood Registry at no cost to the family, will enroll nearly 700 children in its first year.

“We are excited about launching the Newborn Possibilities Program in Tucson, which is really the birthplace of family cord blood banking,” stated Tom Moore, chief executive officer of CBR. “This program is a way for us to provide a safety net to children at-risk for cerebral palsy and other forms of neonatal brain injury while helping to advance the science of regenerative medicine. CBR and our collaborators in this unique program share a commitment to advance cord blood stem cell research, expand education about the value of cord blood banking, and improve outcomes for children with neurological disabilities.”

“We believe that cord blood will play a very important role in future medicine and will benefit so many children in our community at risk for cerebral palsy,” said Anne Sarabia and Charis Ober, founders of the Save the Cord Foundation. “Our dream is that this program will inspire other medical institutions to follow and make preserving cord blood the standard of care for all newborns.”

“The Newborn Possibilities Program is laying the groundwork for potential new treatment options for cerebral palsy and neurological disorders by connecting patients who may be at risk for these conditions and who have access to their cord blood stem cells with FDA-approved research studies,” said Dr. Hugh Miller, the head of WOMB and a maternal-fetal medicine specialist who directs the Newborn Possibilities Program at Tucson Medical Center. “We believe this program will be instrumental in accelerating the pace of research and potentially helping many children.”

A growing body of published data suggests that a child’s own newborn stem cells from the umbilical cord may play an important role in helping the body repair damage to nerve and brain tissue. This research has led the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to approve a human clinical trial evaluating the safety and efficacy of using a child’s own newborn blood stem cells to treat cerebral palsy.

About Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral palsy represents a significant unmet medical need which currently has no cure and limited treatment options. It is defined as a chronic condition that affects body movement and muscle coordination -- as well as other areas such as vision, learning and speech. The precise mechanisms that cause the brain injury resulting in cerebral palsy are still not known, but it is believed that most injury is caused by damage to the brain either through lack of oxygen or blood circulation which typically occurs before, during, or shortly after birth. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately two to three children in 1,000 are affected by the condition.

A recent report by the March of Dimes estimates that one out of every 10 pregnancies in the U.S. results in a premature birth, which is defined as birth occurring at less than 37 weeks’ gestation. Infants who survive premature birth face a higher risk of developing neurological complications such as cerebral palsy and hearing loss.

About the Program Collaborators

Cord Blood Registry’s Center for Regenerative Medicine is a scientific research collaboration established by Cord Blood Registry (CBR), in partnership with leading research institutions from around the world, to promote greater scientific understanding of newborn stem cells and advance their use to treat life-threatening injuries and diseases in children. CBR is the world’s largest stem cell bank, focused on the collection, processing and storage of newborn stem cells from umbilical cord blood and ensuring their viability for medical use. To date, CBR has processed and stored cord blood units for

over 300,000 newborns from around the world and has released more client cord blood units for specific therapeutic use than any other family cord blood bank. Visit www.CordBlood.com.

Save the Cord Foundation is a Tucson based, 501c3 non-profit foundation, established to advance awareness and education surrounding the need to preserve umbilical cord blood. The foundation's mission is to inform expectant parents and the public with fair, balanced and accurate information concerning the medical and lifesaving benefits of saving cord blood. Save the Cord Foundation believes that by advancing cord blood research and education, we can expand and discover new medical treatment options and save lives. Visit www.savethecordfoundation.org.

Tucson Medical Center has cared for the Tucson community for 65 years, and has become the leading provider in the region for emergency care (including Tucson's first Children's Emergency Center), women's and maternity care (with more than 6,000 births each year), and pediatric care (with top-notch intensive care units for children and newborns). TMC is licensed for 650 adult and pediatric beds. The hospital serves more than 30,000 inpatients and 122,000 outpatients yearly and has several emphasis areas, including maternal and child health, cardiac care, hospice care, neuroscience, orthopedics, diagnostic services, behavioral health and senior services.

Watching Over Mothers and Babies Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, formed by Dr Hugh Miller in 2003 as an extension of his professional and personal commitment to improving the health of mothers and babies. The Foundation is an outgrowth of past research activities and a platform for new research partnerships dedicated to improving maternal-child health. The WOMB Foundation is committed to the systematic exploration of those major health conditions that continue to compromise the health of pregnant women and their children. The staff at the WOMB foundation believes that multiple avenues of scientific exploration and sustained inquiry will lead to important diagnostic and therapeutic discoveries. These advances will ultimately contribute to the greater understanding of perinatal disease resulting in healthier mothers and babies.

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