



Health Bulletin



FEDERAL CONTRACT AWARDED TO NMDP Contract Establishes Foundation For The Advancement Of Stem Cell Transplantation

(NAPSA)—The National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP) has been awarded a contract from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to continue operating the National Registry of unrelated marrow and blood stem cell donors.

For the past 15 years, the NMDP has dedicated itself to facilitating marrow and blood stem cell transplants from unrelated donors for patients with life-threatening blood diseases. With the support of a dynamic Network of more than 460 partners, thousands of patients have received their second chance at life and the opportunity to turn their dreams into reality.

Tonya Ghant is one those patients who received her second chance at life through the NMDP. Life was great for Tonya before she fell ill. "I had just had a baby, went back to work doing private duty nursing," Tonya said. All of a sudden, just gradually, her health deteriorated. Her doctors diagnosed leukemia.

"My daughter was just two at that time. I didn't know who was going to take care of my daughter. I didn't know if I was going to be around to raise her," Tonya said. Without a marrow or blood stem cell transplant, Tonya would most likely die. She needed a donor for her transplant. Since her family was not suitable donors, Tonya needed a stranger to give her a second chance at life. Tonya is African American and would most likely to match someone who shares her similar heritage.

"We were desperate to find a matching donor for my transplant. When the NMDP found my donor, it was the best Christmas present I could have received that year," Tonya said. "The NMDP was my lifeline. I now have my



A successful transplant gave Tonya Ghant (L) the chance to raise her daughter, Arianna (R) and to pursue her dreams.

whole life ahead of me." Tonya will receive her nursing degree in a few months. She plans to specialize in oncology where she can show patients that she is a living miracle.

"The continued relationship with HRSA will help the NMDP expand its lifesaving work. The future holds great promise for extending and improving lives through innovative stem cell therapies," said Jeffrey Chell, M.D., NMDP chief executive officer.

The HRSA funding will help us increase the number of unrelated marrow and blood stem cell transplants, increase access for minorities and advance the science of transplantation. "The commitment of donors, the support of the federal government, the hard work and dedication of staff at the NMDP's Network at Donor Centers and Transplant Centers as well as staff at the NMDP have all contributed to the success of our program. So much has been done and we look forward to doing so much more," Dr. Chell said.

To survive these patients need

stem cells to help their bodies make new, healthy marrow. Stem cells are immature cells that can develop into red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Stem cells usually live in bone marrow but are also released, in small numbers, into the blood stream.

Although minority patients are finding donors for their transplants but they are still less likely than Caucasians to identify a matched donor. More African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and American Indians/Alaska Natives are needed as volunteer donors, so others can have a second chance at life.

The NMDP is committed to its mission to extend and improve life through innovative stem cell therapies. The NMDP has facilitated more than 15,000 transplants throughout the world for patients with life-threatening diseases such as leukemia and aplastic anemia, as well as certain immune system and genetic disorders. The NMDP is the only organization that offers searching patients who do not have suitable family donors a single point of access for all three types of stem cells used in transplantation: marrow, peripheral blood and umbilical cord blood. Through its extensive U.S. and international Network, the NMDP manages the largest and most diverse Registry of volunteer donors, including more than 20,000 cord blood units. Matching donors to patients is only part of NMDP's lifesaving mission. The NMDP also provides support for patients and physicians and conducts research aimed at increasing opportunities for and improving the outcomes of stem cell transplants.

For more information, please call the NMDP at 1-800-MARROW-2 or visit online at www.marrow.org.