

# WORD FROM WASHINGTON



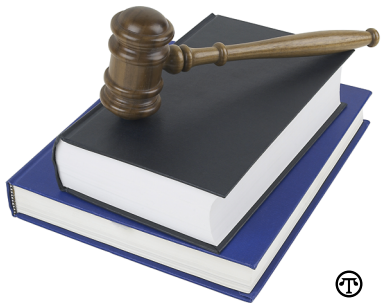
## Legislation To Help Families Protect Health

(NAPSA)—New legislation introduced in Congress would let parents use pretax dollars to help pay for an increasingly common investment in their families' health: cord blood banking for their newborn.

Called the Family Cord Blood Banking Act, the legislation would amend the current tax laws to allow individuals and couples to use money saved in flexible spending accounts (FSAs), health savings accounts (HSAs), health reimbursement arrangements (HRAs) or the medical expenses tax deduction to pay for umbilical cord blood banking.

A growing number of parents are making the choice to save their newborn's umbilical cord blood, which is a rich source of noncontroversial stem cells. Saving these cells in a cord blood bank ensures that they will be available for the child or another genetically matched family member if needed to treat disease or injury. Cord blood stem cells are currently used to treat more than 70 chronic or life-threatening diseases and researchers are studying their potential to treat even more conditions that affect millions of Americans, including brain injury and type 1 diabetes.

Because many studies involving cord blood require children to



**Pending legislation would allow parents to use pretax dollars toward the cost of banking a newborn's umbilical cord blood.**

have access to their own stem cells, the legislation could have an important effect on advances in science and medicine. By making it easier for families to bank their cord blood, the bill could accelerate the timetable for new research involving cord blood stem cells.

Parents who believe cord blood preservation should be an option through a health savings plan should contact their congressional representatives to urge support for the Family Cord Blood Banking Act. For information on how to communicate with Congress, visit the U.S. House of Representatives at <https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml> or call (202) 225-0100.