



# HEALTH AWARENESS

## Ohio Senate To Decide Fate Of Bipartisan Cord Blood Awareness Legislation

(NAPSA)—Expectant parents in Ohio could soon benefit from better information about the life-saving stem cells in their baby's umbilical cord and the options for preserving them if the state Senate agrees to pass a well-supported, bipartisan education bill passed by the House.

House Bill 102, which does not require additional funding, would task the Ohio Department of Health with providing cord blood banking information and encouraging health care professionals to educate parents about the options to preserve the stem cells for family use or donate them for public use.

Sponsored by state Rep. Todd Book, the bill gained 90 additional co-sponsors before it unanimously passed the House with a vote of 97-0. It has also been reviewed by the Senate Health Committee, which approved it with a vote of 9-0.

Cord blood awareness is low despite the fact that stem cells from cord blood are currently used to treat nearly 80 diseases, and research is exploring their potential to help treat many more, including type 1 diabetes and brain injury. Published research shows that three out of every four pregnant women consider themselves only "minimally informed" about cord blood banking.

Based on these statistics, it's not surprising that the vast majority of parents—nearly 95 percent—do not preserve their newborn's cord blood. In fact, every four minutes in Ohio, a baby is born and the umbilical cord is thrown away as medical waste—more than 140,000 cords per year.



**The House unanimously passed Ohio House Bill 102 to encourage cord blood education. The bill is now in the hands of the Senate.**

According to Dr. Mary Laughlin, associate professor of medicine and pathology at Case Western Reserve University and medical director of the Cleveland Cord Blood Center, cord blood education is sound health policy.

"Five years ago, the Institute of Medicine first recommended that pregnant women should be educated about cord blood early enough in pregnancy that they can make an informed decision about the options to preserve these valuable stem cells," said Laughlin. "Every state senator should be encouraged to support this bill and make sure it gets passed into law."

Similar legislation has been enacted in 17 other states, representing nearly two-thirds of births in the U.S.

Ohio residents who want to voice an opinion on this bill can get contact information for their state senator and other key Senate leaders at [www.senate.state.oh.us/senators/](http://www.senate.state.oh.us/senators/).