

Media Contact: Frances Verter
301-325-7369 (cell)
info@parentsguidecordblood.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation Introduces New Brochure
During Cord Blood Awareness Month to Address Critical Education Gap**

Published Data Reinforces Need for Better Cord Blood Education

BROOKEVILLE, Md. – July 7, 2009 – Expectant parents are poorly informed about cord blood banking, according to a study published in the *Journal of Reproductive Medicine*. In fact, of the expectant mothers in the study who indicated they have some knowledge of cord blood banking, 74 percent considered themselves minimally informed. Yet, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences recommends that all expectant parents should be educated about cord blood stem cells early enough in pregnancy that they can make an informed decision about the options to preserve these medically-beneficial cells.

To help address this significant education gap, [Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation](#), the most comprehensive resource for expectant parents about cord blood medical research and cord blood storage options, today announced the release of a new [educational brochure](#) for expectant parents in conjunction with Cord Blood Awareness Month. The brochure has been vetted and endorsed by a scientific and medical advisory board of leading caregivers and researchers and follows the guidance of the Institute of Medicine.

The brochure can be downloaded at no cost from the foundation's home page: [ParentsGuideCordBlood.org](#). It has been translated into several languages, including Spanish, German, Italian, Greek, and Hebrew, with more translations in progress.

“Cord blood stem cells are an increasingly important medical resource for saving lives,” said Frances Verter, PhD, founder of Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation. “This brochure is intended to ensure that more pregnant women have the opportunity to consider saving their newborn's cord blood for family use or donating the cord blood to others who may have a critical

medical need. I want all women to understand why cord blood should be preserved and why allowing these cells to be thrown away as medical waste should be a last choice option.”

Dr. Verter founded the Parent's Guide to Cord Blood in 1998 after her daughter Shai died of leukemia. What started as a small community service, has grown to become one of the leading parent resources on all aspects of cord blood banking. In 2007, the Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation incorporated as a non-profit organization, making all donations fully tax deductible. The foundation's website, ParentsGuideCordBlood.org, has held one of the top Google ranks for cord blood banking information for the past decade. It currently averages a half million hits per month.

The release of the brochure expands the educational mission of the foundation beyond the internet, into birthing classes and physician's offices. To date, 16 states have passed laws to improve cord blood education during pregnancy, and to encourage physicians to take an active role in educating expectant parents about the options for banking cord blood. A [federal bill](#) sponsored by Representative Jackie Speier is currently under consideration in Congress. The brochure from the Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation was created to meet the educational requirements of these public policy initiatives and can be distributed by physicians and other healthcare providers.

About Cord Blood

The blood that remains in a newborn's umbilical cord immediately following birth contains a diverse population of stem cells that have distinct characteristics and benefits compared to other sources of stem cells. Since cord blood stem cells are immunologically younger than other “adult” stem cell sources, they demonstrate more versatility and flexibility when used in transplantation. In addition, cord blood stem cells have [demonstrated embryonic-like capabilities](#) to proliferate and develop into all of the major cell types in the body. For more than 20 years, cord blood stem cells have been used in transplants to cure patients of cancers like leukemia and lymphoma, as well as blood diseases and immune disorders.

Birth is the one-time opportunity when parents can either donate their child's cord blood to a public bank, where it can be matched with patients seeking a transplant donor, or they can preserve it for their own family in a private bank. Yet only a few percent of parents in the US take advantage of either option.

About Cord Blood Awareness Month

July has been designated “Cord Blood Awareness Month” by the American Hospital Association’s Society for Healthcare Strategy & Market Development (SHSMD) with the goal of raising awareness about newborn stem cells from umbilical cord blood. Cord Blood Awareness Month strives to empower expectant parents to make informed choices regarding their family’s future health.

About Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation

The mission of the Parent's Guide to Cord Blood (PGCB) Foundation is to provide parents with impartial education about cord blood medical research and cord blood storage options, as well as to conduct and publish statistical analyses on medical research or policy developments which could expand the likelihood of cord blood usage. The PGCB Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) charitable educational organization which is supported by donations from individuals and organizations that support the Foundation’s mission. All donations are fully tax-deductible.

#