

Canadian Blood Services and Osler provide hope for stem cell patients

A partnership between Canadian Blood Services and William Osler Health System (Osler) is bringing Canada's new public cord blood bank closer to realization, and has potential to benefit thousands of patients across the country and around the world.

Osler's Brampton Civic Hospital has been named as one of only four hospitals in the country and the only community hospital to serve as a collection site. Brampton Civic will begin assisting Canadian Blood Services with the recruitment of potential mothers from the area, and the collection of their babies' donated umbilical cord blood for stem cell treatments that may contribute to safe and effective medical treatments for the future.

"We are honoured to have William Osler Health System as one of our collection hospitals," said Canadian Blood Services Chief Executive Officer Dr. Graham Sher. "This partnership underscores the collaborative effort our organizations have taken to launch a national public cord blood bank one that offers more opportunities to find a match and save more lives."

Providing Canadians with a new national public cord blood bank will help close the gap in Canadian Blood Services' ability to find matches for patients through its stem cell network OneMatch. This is especially important to Canadians as many stem cell patients are from diverse populations, particularly Aboriginal, black and multi-ethnic. These patients often have increased complexities when finding a matching donor.

"We are pleased to be joining forces with Canadian Blood Services on this important initiative and proud to be the only community hospital selected in Canada to serve as a collection site for the National Public Cord Blood Bank," said Osler President and CEO Matthew Anderson. "By working together, we can provide increased hope for difficult-to-match patients waiting for stem cell transplants, and make a significant difference to the health of people in our community, across the country, and around the world." Working with Canadian Blood Services, Brampton Civic will begin recruiting for expectant mothers to volunteer to be part of this program, and then collecting their babies' donated cord blood units to be publically banked, starting in mid-2014. Healthy, pregnant women 18 years of age or older will be able to donate their babies' cord blood with signed consent to any patient in need.

Canadian Blood Services will be asking healthy moms who are delivering at Brampton Civic to donate their babies' cord blood during a validation phase from December 2013 to mid-2014. This testing phase is to ensure that the National Public Cord Blood Bank runs at the highest quality when it launches in mid-2014.

For more information on the National Public Cord Blood Bank, visit www.blood.ca/cordblood