

Osler celebrates the official implementation of Canadian Blood Services Cord Blood Bank

Canadian Blood Services recognized William Osler Health System recently week for its work in serving as a cord blood collection site during a celebration of the official implementation of the Canadian Blood Services Cord Blood Bank.

In July 2014, Brampton Civic Hospital began collecting umbilical cord blood, which may be used to treat patients requiring a stem cell transplant in Canada and around the world. Brampton Civic is one of only five hospitals in Canada and the only community hospital selected as a collection site.

Serving a growing and diverse community, collection efforts at Brampton Civic Hospital are helping to benefit Canadian patients by providing additional opportunities for finding a match, and helping to save more lives.

"We have had tremendous participation and support from our community since we launched as a cord blood collection site," said Joanne Flewwelling, executive vice-president of clinical services and chief nursing executive with Osler. "With almost 1,000 donations of umbilical cord blood in our first year, we are proud of our efforts as a collection site, helping to diversify the cord blood bank supply and allow Canadian Blood Services to match more patients with life-saving stem cell transplants."

Osler serves one of the fastest-growing and most ethnically-diverse regions in the country. Brampton Civic also has one of the largest labour and delivery programs in Ontario, with more than 5,000 babies born last year.

"Partnerships, like the one we enjoy with William Osler Health System are important to help build an ethnically diverse cord blood bank," said Dr. Heidi Elmoazzen, director of Canadian Blood Services' Cord Blood Bank. "Approximately 75 per cent of cord blood donations at Osler's Brampton Civic Hospital are from babies of ethnically diverse backgrounds."

Canadian Blood Services has implemented a national public Cord Blood Bank to be used by anyone who needs stem cell treatment. Cord blood is blood in the umbilical cord and placenta that is rich with blood-forming stem cells that can help save the lives of patients with diseases and disorders such as leukemia, lymphoma and aplastic anemia.

Expectant mothers who give birth at participating hospitals, including Brampton Civic, can now help build an ethnically diverse stem cell bank in Canada by donating their baby's cord blood.

Guests at the celebration heard the touching words of Amy Lupton, mother of Nate, whose life was saved by a stem cell transplant from donated cord blood from an unrelated international donor.

"The only hope for Nate's survival was a stem cell transplant," Lupton said. "When he was eight months old he received a stem cell transplant from cord blood because a mother chose to donate her baby's cord blood. As a mother, I appeal to those other mothers to donate their cord blood and save someone's life."

For more information about Canadian Blood Services Cord Blood Bank, visit www.blood.ca/cordblood

