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SENATE  
S. No. 1472

RECEIVED BY 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 15, provides that:

Section 15. The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instil health consciousness among them.

Umbilical cord blood is human blood from the placenta and umbilical cord, collected after the cord has been detached from the newborn baby. Cord blood is utilized as a source of stem cells for transplantation, being rich in hematopoietic stem cells. Hematopoietic stem cells (HSCs) are stem cells that give rise to all the blood cell types including myeloid (monocytes and macrophages, neutrophils, basophils, eosinophils, erythrocytes, megakaryocytes/platelets, dendritic cells), and lymphoid lineages (T-cells, Bcells, NK-cells).<sup>2</sup> Cord blood has more stem cells which can adjust themselves easily when injected into any organ, heart, spleen, nerves or any other body part. Stem cell is a new technology that uses human embryo cells to treat diseases. The embryo cells are called "stem cells" because they can be stimulated to develop into any type of tissue or system. Stem cells are nascent cells that can develop into replacement cells that researchers believe could help treat damaged organs and illnesses.

Most cells can make copies of themselves, but only of the same type. In this respect, stem cells are special. Unlike other cells, they don't have one specific job. They are like a "blank" cell. They don't die and can split to form several different types of cells: It is for this reason that umbilical cord blood is collected. The blood is rich in hematopoietic stem cells. They can produce red blood cells, white blood cells and blood clotting cells. These stem cells can be saved and transplanted into other people to treat deadly diseases. Stem cells from umbilical cord blood can be used to treat a wide variety of blood, bone, genetic, and immune system diseases in children, including: Lymphoma, Leukemia, Adrenoleukodystrophy (a degenerative brain disease), Krabbe's Disease (genetic brain disease), Sickle Cell Anemia, and Osteopetrosis among others.

Recently, there has been a lot of public debate on the collection of other types of stem cells. These cells come from aborted fetuses or human embryos grown in a lab called embryonic stem cells. This debate does not include stem cells taken from umbilical cord blood which are

Adult or Non-Embryonic Stem Cells. There is absolutely no health risk associated with collection, and the process does not interfere with childbirth in any way. Usually, collection takes less than ten minutes. Most healthy women, 18 years of age or older, who undergo a complication-free pregnancy can donate their child's umbilical cord blood. Exceptions to donation of umbilical cord blood include: parents who have a family history of blood, immune system or genetic disorders; women who were prescribed certain medications during pregnancy; and parents who have tested positive for sexually transmitted infection.

The umbilical cord blood that is not donated is merely thrown out as medical waste. Thus, it would be prudent to tell the patient that there is another use for the umbilical cord blood. This bill aims to give parents the option of donating their child's umbilical cord blood for the reasons previously stated. It also aims to establish storage facilities in all hospitals for storing umbilical cord blood.\*

*acv*   
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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\* This bill was originally filed in the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

1 AN ACT  
2 REQUIRING HEALTH WORKERS TO ADVISE PREGNANT WOMEN OF THEIR  
3 OPTION TO DONATE UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD AND ESTABLISHING CORD  
4 BLOOD STORAGE FACILITIES IN ALL HOSPITALS

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

5 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Umbilical Cord Blood  
6 Collection Act."

7 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Principle.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to  
8 protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among  
9 them. For this reason, the state aims to develop new technologies to provide cure for existing  
10 diseases.

11 SECTION 3. *Requirement to Advice of Option to Donate Umbilical Cord Blood.* - All  
12 health care practitioners, who provide health care services to a pregnant woman, during the last  
13 trimester of her pregnancy, which services are directly related to the pregnancy, shall advise her  
14 that she has an option to donate umbilical cord blood, following the birth of her child.

15 SECTION 4. *Definition of Umbilical Cord Blood.* - For purposes of this Act "umbilical  
16 cord blood" means the blood that remains in the umbilical cord and placenta after the birth of a  
17 child.

1           SECTION 5. *Exceptions.* -Nothing in this section shall impose an obligation to advise a  
2 pregnant woman of her option to donate umbilical cord blood upon a health care practitioner if  
3 the giving of such information would be contrary to the health care practitioner's bona fide  
4 religious beliefs.

5           SECTION 6. *Establishment of Cord Blood Storage Facilities.* - One (1) year after the  
6 effectivity of this act, all hospitals should have a facility where cord blood can be stored.  
7 However, if existing hospital blood storage facilities are capable of storing cord blood, the  
8 hospital involved is deemed to have complied with the provisions of this Act.

9           SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Commission Department of  
10 Health shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act within sixty (60)  
11 days following its effectivity.

12           SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive  
13 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent  
14 with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

15           SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or  
16 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain  
17 valid and subsisting.

18           SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
19 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.