

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL ON ETHICAL AND JUDICIAL AFFAIRS

CEJA Report 9-I-07

Subject: Umbilical Cord Blood Banking

Presented by: Mark A. Levine, MD, Chair

Referred to: Reference Committee on Amendments to Constitution and Bylaws  
(Jane C.K. Fitch, MD, Chair)

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*The following recommendations were adopted as AMA Ethics Policy at the 2007 Interim Meeting of the AMA House of Delegates. The full report may be available online at <http://www.ama-assn.org/go/cejareports> or upon request by calling (312) 464-4823.*

### RECOMMENDATION

The Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs recommends that Opinion E-2.165, “Fetal Umbilical Cord Blood,” be replaced with the following and the remainder of this report be filed.

#### E-2.165 Fetal Umbilical Cord Blood

Umbilical cord blood stem cells are useful for some therapeutic purposes. Physicians providing obstetrical care should be prepared to inform pregnant women of the various options regarding cord blood donation or storage and the potential uses of donated samples. Collection procedures must not interfere with standard delivery practices and the safety of a newborn or the mother.

Informed consent for the collection of umbilical cord blood stem cells should be obtained, when feasible, before the onset of labor. Physicians’ ties to public and private cord blood banks must be disclosed during the informed consent process. Physicians shall not accept financial or other inducements for providing samples to cord blood banks.

The utility of umbilical cord blood stem cells is greater when the donation is to a public rather than private bank. Therefore, physicians should encourage women who wish to donate cord blood to donate to a public bank if one is available. Doing so will result in greater availability of stem cells to patients from minority populations.

Private banking should be considered in the unusual circumstance when there exists a family predisposition to a condition in which umbilical cord stem cells are therapeutically indicated. However, because of its cost, limited likelihood of use, and inaccessibility to others, private banking should not be recommended to low-risk families.

Because safety and effectiveness of various methods of cord blood collection and use continue to evolve, physicians should monitor the results of ongoing research.

(New HOD/CEJA Policy)