

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Partnership Strikes a Cord

Canadian Blood Services' cord blood program and the BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre will provide increased hope for stem cell patients

**VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA – JANUARY 9, 2014** – A new partnership between Canadian Blood Services and BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre is bringing Canada's national public cord blood bank closer to realization, and has the potential to benefit thousands of patients across the country and around the world.

Vancouver's BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre has been named as one of four hospitals in the country – and the only hospital in British Columbia – to serve as a collection site. BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre will begin assisting Canadian Blood Services with the recruitment of potential mothers from the area, and the collection of their baby's 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 BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre as one of our collection hospitals" said Dr. Graham Sher, Chief Executive Officer at Canadian Blood Services. "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 national public cord blood bank will improve 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, African-Canadian and multi-ethnic. These patients often have increased complexities when finding a matching donor.

"We are excited to be joining forces with Canadian Blood Services on this important initiative and proud to be selected to serve as a collection site for the National Public Cord Blood Bank," said Jan Christilaw, President BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre. "Through this partnership, 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, BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre will encourage expectant mothers to volunteer to be part of this program. Starting in 2014, when those expectant mothers who agree to participate come into BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre to deliver their baby, their baby's donated cord blood units will be collected to be publically banked. Healthy, pregnant women 18 years of age or older will be able to donate their baby's cord blood with signed consent. The donated cord blood will be available to any patient in need.



Canadian Blood Services  
Société canadienne du sang



Healthy moms who are delivering at BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre will be invited to donate their baby's cord blood during a validation phase from early 2014 until mid-2014. This testing phase by Canadian Blood Services is to ensure that the National Public Cord Blood Bank is operating at the highest quality when it launches in 2014.

"Offering British Columbians the best care possible is the commitment we make in healthcare each day," said Health Minister Terry Lake. "By creating a cord blood collection site at BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre, we're increasing the chances for patients to get the help and the match they need for their specialized care. The BC government is proud to support this national effort. "

On March 14, 2011, provincial and territorial ministries of health (except Québec) announced a combined investment of \$48 million, including \$12.5 million in fundraising, to create a national public umbilical cord blood bank. Public support of Canadian Blood Services' fundraising campaign *For All Canadians* is crucial as work continues to bring collection hospitals into operation in Brampton (GTA), Edmonton and Vancouver in 2014, with manufacturing and storage locations at two existing blood stem cell manufacturing sites in Ottawa and Edmonton by 2014.

For more information on the National Public Cord Blood Bank, please visit [www.blood.ca/cordblood](http://www.blood.ca/cordblood).

**ABOUT CANADIAN BLOOD SERVICES ONEMATCH STEM CELL & MARROW NETWORK:** Canadian Blood Services' OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network is a program dedicated to recruiting healthy, committed volunteer donors for patients in need of blood (hematopoietic) stem cells. OneMatch also conducts searches for matched, unrelated donors for patients; ensures donors are healthy and able to donate; and, coordinates the collection and delivery of stem cells in Canada and around the world. As an accredited member of the World Marrow Donor Association (WMDA), OneMatch represents an important part of an international group of 72 registries and 48 cord blood banks that transmit their donor HLA typing results to Bone Marrow Donors Worldwide (BMDW). As a result, when searching on behalf of Canadian patients, OneMatch has access to more than 22 million volunteer donors in 52 countries and almost 600,000 publically banked cord blood units from 48 cord banks in 33 countries. As part of Canadian Blood Services, the provincial and territorial Ministries of Health provide operational funding to OneMatch. For more information, please visit our Web site at [www.onematch.ca](http://www.onematch.ca).

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#### **ABOUT THE BC WOMEN'S HOSPITAL & HEALTH CENTRE:**

BC Women's is the only facility in British Columbia caring for the comprehensive health needs of women, newborn babies and families. For more than 80 years, BC Women's has been a leader in providing maternity and newborn health care. Averaging 7,000 births annually, we are best known as one of Canada's pre-eminent obstetrical centres. About 20% of British Columbia's babies are born at BC Women's. BC Women's also provides one-of-a-kind care to meet women's specialized health needs throughout their lives. Our philosophy is women-centred care: we use our research and experience to develop unique programs and services just for women. BC Women's will host a cord blood bank collection service in collaboration with Canadian Blood Services.

For more information about the BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre, please visit: <http://www.bcwomens.ca/default.htm>

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