

*News from the*

**U.S. Senate Committee on  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions**

**Michael B. Enzi (Wyoming), Chairman**



**For Immediate Release  
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## **House and Senate Pass Stem Cell Cord Blood Bill; New Hope for Treatment of Devastating Illness, Enzi Says**

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Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today said the House of Representatives approved H.R. 2520, the "Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005," a bill that will "expand access to life-saving therapies for many Americans facing devastating illnesses." The House action followed the Senate's unanimous approval of the measure Friday night.

"The goal of this bill is to ensure that individuals in need of transplants receive appropriately matched transplant materials," Enzi said. "Cord blood and bone marrow are non-controversial sources of stem cells, and they have proven track records as therapies."

"The initial costs of creating a network of cord blood units with an inventory appropriate for the entire nation are high," Enzi added. "For that reason, and because of the important public health need that is currently unmet, it is appropriate for a government program to help start up this network."

Stem cells in cord blood are able to replace many diseased tissues with healthy ones. They also are proven and effective therapies for diseases such as leukemia, sickle cell, Fanconi's anemia, Krabbe's disease and severe combined immunodeficiency. The bill, which passed the Senate late yesterday, now awaits the President's signature.

Enzi praised the steadfast efforts of Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), who serves on the HELP Committee, as key to developing the Senate legislation and helping ensure its passage on Friday. He also credited the support of Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), Senator John Ensign (R-NV), Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), whose efforts were also instrumental to ensuring Senate passage of the bill.

H.R. 2520 will allow qualified cord blood stem cell banks to assist in establishing and maintaining a National Cord Blood Stem Cell Bank Network, which will:

- Acquire tissue-type, test, cryopreserve, and store donated units of human cord blood acquired with the informed consent of the donor;
- Make cord blood units available to transplant centers for stem cell transplantations; and,
- Make cord blood units that are not appropriate for clinical use available for peer-reviewed research.

The bill authorizes up to \$34 million to support in Fiscal Year 2006, with another \$ 53 million in each of the following years, up to FY 2010. The funding will not only cover the establishment of the national cord blood bank network but also continue the bone marrow registry program.

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