



**July 16, 2024**

RE: Promised Cures, Tainted Cells: How Cord Blood Banks Mislead Parents

To the Editor of the NY Times:

We were extremely disappointed by the biased and negatively focused article on cord blood banking in the Times on July 15th. The authors omitted several important points about the benefits of cord blood banking that we highlight here.

First, banked umbilical cord blood saves more lives than the article implied. Umbilical cord blood from public banks have been used in more than 45,000 bone marrow transplants since 1993, providing access to life-saving, curative therapies for patients, often of diverse ancestry, lacking other available donors.

Second, both the current life-saving use and the future potential of these cells is underrepresented, misleading parents and health care providers about the value of donating or banking their baby's cord blood in FDA-regulated public cord blood banks or accredited private banks for use in bone marrow transplantation or emerging cellular therapies.

While, we deeply regret the unfortunate experiences of the individuals highlighted in the article, the authors presented a one-sided story, neglecting to mention the more than 1,000 patients treated on clinical trials with cord blood banked in private banks.

The best way to understand the potential uses of both privately and publicly banked cord blood is to conduct well-designed clinical trials. We commend the federal government for its investment in public cord blood banking and recommend further investment in clinical trials by private banks and federal agencies alike.

Sincerely and on behalf of the Cord Blood Association,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanne Kurtzberg", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Joanne Kurtzberg, MD  
**President, Cord Blood Association**

Jerome Harris Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics  
Professor of Pathology  
Director, Marcus Center for Cellular Cures  
Director, Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplant Program  
Director, Carolinas Cord Blood Bank at Duke  
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