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**HEADLINE:** Lawmakers Aim to Boost Medical Uses of Bone Marrow, Cord Blood

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\*\* CQ HEALTHBEAT \*\*

\* Lawmakers Aim to Boost Medical Uses of Bone *Marrow*, *Cord Blood* \* By John Reichard, CQ HealthBeat Editor

A bipartisan group of lawmakers is trying to give a push to the medical uses of bone *marrow* and of blood drawn from the umbilical *CORDS* of newborn babies by announcing support for legislation reauthorizing a 2005 law (PL 109-129) to promote those uses.

The legislation (S 3751) "will bring hope and healing to thousands of Americans suffering from diseases such as leukemia, sickle cell anemia and Hodgkin's Disease, just to name a few," said one of the lawmakers, Utah Republican Senator Orrin G. Hatch. "Patients in need of these transplants deserve nothing less, and this legislation will bring more access to these life-saving treatments," he said.

Hatch joined several other lawmakers in introducing the legislation as the Senate wrapped up its work last week before the August recess. They included Sens. Christopher J. Dodd, D-Conn., Jack Reed, D-R.I., Richard M. Burr, R-N.C., and Al Franken, D-Minn.

Known as the "Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act of 2010," the measure would reauthorize a combined \$53 million in annual funding over five years for the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation and National *Cord Blood* Inventory programs. Dodd said the legislation would increase physician access to bone *marrow* and *cord blood*.

Added Burr: "Although we have made important strides in collecting *cord blood* for transplantation in recent years, we must build on these efforts if we are going to be able to meet the needs of all patients in need of a *cord blood* or bone *marrow* transplant."

The measure also would require *cord blood* banks to develop an annual plan showing progress toward self sufficiency. Part of that would involve showing how they plan to increase *cord blood* collection.

The Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program includes the National *Marrow* Donor Program, Jeffrey W. Chell, CEO of the National *Marrow* Donor Program, said the reauthorization "will provide us with the opportunity to continue our efforts to increase the number of adult donors and umbilical *cord blood* units." The program says it has aided in 40,000 transplants of *marrow* or *cord blood* cells.

Reps. C.W. Bill Young, R-Fla., and Doris Matsui, D-Calif., have introduced a companion measure (HR 6081) in the House.

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Source: CQ HealthBeat Same-day coverage of the people and events shaping health care policy from Washington.

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*Highlights: Marrow, Cord Blood, marrow, cords, cord blood, marrow transplant, National Marrow DonorProgram, National Marrow Donor Program*