



AMH Obstetricians Honored By Cord Blood Bank

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ALTON, IL – Alton Memorial Hospital physicians had the highest percentage of cord blood banked, out of 29 participating hospitals, by the St. Louis Cord Blood Bank in 2013.

Eleven different physicians who delivered babies at AMH in 2013 contributed a total of 404 cord blood collections. Of those, 84 (or 20.79 percent) met the criteria to be stored as potential stem cell sources for patient transplant. The overall banking rate for the St. Louis Cord Blood Bank in 2013 was 13.5 percent.

“The staff at Alton Memorial Hospital does a wonderful job with offering and coordinating the process to all women,” said Kathy Mueckl, RN, the nurse coordinator of the St. Louis Cord Blood Bank. “A large percentage of the donations came from women who had not pre-registered to donate. We realize our program could not exist without the physicians and the hospital offering the option for women to donate. We are extremely grateful for Alton Memorial’s incredible dedication to this life-saving program. Every banked unit has the potential to offer a life-saving stem cell product to someone in need.”

Mueckl said that of the 29 hospitals participating in the SLCBB, almost 38 percent of the deliveries in 2013 made a cord blood donation. AMH exceeded the norm there as well, collecting donations from more than 56 percent of its more than 700 deliveries last year.

“It’s something you can do with almost all deliveries, it doesn’t take much time and it’s



potentially a lifesaver,” said Dr. Joseph Talsky, of the BJC Medical Group of Illinois and OB/GYN Associates of Alton. Dr. Talsky contributed 92 donations out of the AMH total. “The main thing is getting the consent of the family and then taking the time to do it.”

After a baby has been delivered, the umbilical cord, placenta and the blood contained within are usually discarded. With parental consent, the umbilical cord blood can be collected and sent to the SLCBB for processing. The collection procedure is painless for mother and baby, and doesn’t interfere with the birthing process.

Umbilical cord blood is rich in hematopoietic stem cells like those in bone marrow. Hematopoietic stem cells are the parent cells that create all of a person’s blood cells — red cells that carry oxygen, white cells that fight disease and platelets that help blood to clot.

The stem cells from the cord blood can be transplanted and used to treat more than 70 diseases, including leukemia, lymphoma and sickle cell anemia. Children and adults diagnosed with metabolic disorders such as immune deficiencies and bone marrow failure also may require a stem cell transplant to replenish cells that are abnormal or destroyed due to therapy.

Other delivering physicians at AMH in 2013, and the number of cord blood donations by each, are Dr. Sara Cannon (62), Dr. Nikol McDonald (50), Dr. Jamie North (49), Dr. Catherine Wikoff (44), Dr. Geoffrey Turner (37), Dr. Sonia Matthews (21), Dr. Tim Kisabeth (20), Dr. James Stubbs (20), Dr. Soontorn Thrupkaew (8) and Dr. Rachel Durham (1).

“Our department gives information to each mom in the folders that come from the doctors’ offices, but then it is really physician driven,” said Jessica Mossman, manager of the Family Birth Center at AMH. “Many of the physicians really encourage it, but all of our nurses ask every mom that comes in if she wants to donate. It is a great thing to help support.”

Established in 1995, the St. Louis Cord Blood Bank collected 15,457 cord blood donations last year and exported 174 units to children and adults in need of a stem cell transplant. In May 2013, the SLCBB became the fourth cord blood bank in the world to receive licensure from the FDA to manufacture and distribute cord blood-derived stem cell products.

The AMH total of 404 was 73 percent higher than in 2012 and represents almost 20 percent of its total donations since it began in 1996. The 84 banked donations represent almost twice as many as any other year.

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