



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR RELEASE: April 2, 2009

CONTACT:	LifeShare Blood Centers	Woman's Hospital
	Libby Murphy	Jodi Conachen
	Director, Development & PR	Public Relations Manager
	(318) 683-6782	(225) 924-8527
	Cell (318) 401-3350	Cell (225) 324-2513
	libby.murphy@lifeshare.org	jodi.conachen@womans.org

LifeShare Cord Blood Bank announces first hospital affiliate

Baton Rouge, LA – April 2, 2009 – LifeShare Blood Centers and Woman's Hospital have announced the first hospital affiliate of LifeShare Cord Blood Bank: The Public Cord Blood Program of Louisiana. The announcement was made at Woman's Hospital preceding a lecture to medical professionals by Joanne Kurtzberg, MD, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplantation at Duke University Medical Center, and an internationally renowned expert in umbilical cord blood transplantation.

"We are entering a new era in Louisiana," said Margaret Wallace, President and CEO of LifeShare Blood Centers. "The public cord blood bank of Louisiana means more lives will be saved, thanks to caring mothers who want to help others by donating their babies' cord blood, which otherwise would be thrown away. We are thrilled to launch this effort with Louisiana's leading birthplace, Woman's Hospital."

According to the Louisiana Bureau of Vital Statistics, more babies are born at Woman's Hospital than any other birthing facility in Louisiana. Hospital spokesperson Jodi Conachen noted there were 8,400 births at the facility in 2008.

"We are excited to offer this opportunity to our patients and to be part of this groundbreaking initiative that will help to save lives," said Teri G. Fontenot, President/CEO of Woman's Hospital.

Once considered medical waste, the umbilical cord is now known to contain stem cells that can be used to provide a life-saving stem cell transplant for

patients with a number of conditions. Currently, over 70 diseases are being treated with cord blood stem cell transplants, many of which are cancers and blood disorders.

In the 2008 regular legislative session, LifeShare Blood Centers was appropriated \$1 million to establish the state's public cord blood program. A public program establishes a resource for Louisiana's maternity patients who wish to donate the tissue for the public good. The publicly donated cord blood units will be listed on the national single point of access registry which is searched daily to find a match for patients in need of a cord blood stem cell transplant.

In 2005, the 110th Congress passed the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act, which places a high priority on the recruitment and collection of cord blood units from "racial and ethnic minority groups." Louisiana's racially and ethnically diverse population has made the state an area of interest for stem cell transplantation specialists.

The National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) maintains and operates the federal C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program. The cord blood units donated to LifeShare Cord Blood Bank will ultimately be listed in NMDP's registry of publicly available cord blood units, initially through a mentoring affiliation with Duke University's Carolinas Cord Blood Bank.

"The affiliation of LifeShare Blood Centers with Woman's Hospital is very exciting and has the potential to significantly increase the amount of cord blood that is donated and used for promising medical therapies and research," said Kurtzberg. "Duke's affiliation with the Carolinas Cord Blood bank has placed an integral role in the strides we have made over the years with cord blood transplant and we're hopeful that this similar effort will help advance the field even further."

In a statement issued by NMDP CEO Jeffrey Chell, MD, said "Given the diversity of the population in Louisiana, cord blood collection from its citizens will be especially useful as it will increase the diversity of the national inventory and increase the likelihood of finding an acceptable match for those who have particular difficulty today."

Cord blood collections at Woman's Hospital are expected to begin in May. According to LifeShare Cord Blood Bank executive director Terri Turner-Marse, after the initial pilot program at Woman's Hospital is well established, LifeShare plans to gradually expand the program throughout the state.

"Birth is life renewing itself. Cord blood donation gives hope for the miracle of renewing another's life," said Turner-Marse.

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About LifeShare Blood Centers:

LifeShare Blood Centers is Louisiana's oldest and largest blood center and among the five oldest blood centers in the nation. Founded in Shreveport in 1942, LifeShare provides blood components to 139 medical facilities throughout Louisiana, Southeast Texas, and Southeast Arkansas. It is a 501(c)(3) organization governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees, and is a member of America's Blood Centers, American Rare Donor Program, is licensed by the Food and Drug Administration, and accredited by AABB. LifeShare Cord Blood Bank: The Public Cord Blood Bank of Louisiana was established in 2008 as a program of LifeShare Blood Centers.

About Woman's Hospital:

Woman's Hospital's **40 Extraordinary Years** began in 1968, when it opened its doors and became one of the first women's specialty hospitals in the nation. Today, Woman's remains a freestanding not-for-profit community hospital, delivering more than 8,400 babies each year (the 19th largest delivery service in the country and largest in Louisiana) and provides health services to women of every age. Woman's is the only hospital in Louisiana to be named by *Modern Healthcare* magazine as one of the 100 Best Places to Work in Healthcare as well as the only hospital in Baton Rouge to achieve Magnet Status. Woman's Hospital operates one of the largest Level III Regional Neonatal Intensive Care Units in the country, caring for more than 1,500 babies each year. In addition, the hospital performs more than 7,300 surgeries, 44,000 breast procedures and 86,000 Pap tests on an annual basis. For more information, visit womans.org.

About Carolinas Cord Blood Bank:

The Carolinas Cord Blood Bank (CCBB) at Duke was established in 1996 with the support of the NHLBI sponsored Cord Blood Transplantatin study. Over the years, the CCBB has grown to become a member of the National Cord Blood Inventory (NCBI) of the C.W. Bill Young Transplantation Program. The main mission of the CCBB is to collect and store cord blood units for unrelated transplantation to treat patients with cancers, genetic diseases, hemoglobinopathies, immune deficiencies, and metabolic diseases. The CCBB strives to provide the highest quality source of ethnically and racially diverse cord blood units to the public registries. This increases access to transplantataion for patients in need.