



## Press Release

# Monroe County Democratic Caucus

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**For Immediate Release**  
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## Heider Proposes Cord Blood Stem Cell Law

Law Will Give Hope to Thousands of Cancer Patients

**Rochester, New York – July 31, 2006:** Today, Monroe County Legislator Travis Heider put forth a proposal that requires expectant mothers to be informed of the option to donate their newborn's umbilical cord blood to a public cord blood bank. Umbilical cord blood is a rich source of blood-forming stem cells which can be used in research and the treatment of disease.

Heider and his wife were told about cord blood donation by Brighton resident Denise Johnson, a long-time advocate for the cause. Johnson donated the cord blood of her son, Brady, who is now four years old.

"When I learned that cord blood has the potential to save the lives of people who have illnesses such as leukemia and lymphoma, I felt that this was something my family could do to make a difference," said Johnson.

The Heiders' decided to do the same for daughter Ellison, who was born on May 19, 2006. "We were thrilled to celebrate Ellison's birth by making this potentially life-saving donation," said Heider.

Umbilical cord blood is used as an alternative to bone marrow in hematopoietic stem cell transplants, and can be a critical resource for patients unable to find genetically compatible bone marrow donors. Formerly discarded as waste, cord blood is now used in the treatment of close to 70 life-threatening illnesses including cancers, anemias, and immune system disorders.

Heider's proposal for a Cord Blood Stem Cell Notification Law calls on the County Health Department to create a brochure informing parents of the option to donate their newborn's umbilical cord blood, and requires health care practitioners in Monroe County to distribute this brochure to women prior to the 35<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy.

"Cord blood donation is risk-free for mother and child and can be done at no cost to parents," said Heider. "It is vital that we raise public awareness of this simple act that has the potential to save many lives."

A copy of the proposal is attached.

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