



Future Health welcomes new cord blood regulations

Future Health Technologies Ltd (Future Health), the UK's leading private family cord blood bank, has warmly welcomed the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) announcement today (30 April 2008) that it is introducing formal regulation of umbilical cord blood collection in the UK so that only people with specialist training can undertake this important task. However, the company gave a more qualified welcome to the news that all maternity units that collect cord blood will need to obtain a specific licence from the HTA.

Future Health, which was the UK's first fully accredited private family cord blood storage facility, already offers all its clients the option of a subsidised third party collection service, using qualified phlebotomists. The company was the first licensed cord blood bank to offer specialist training for midwives in cord blood collection.

Future Health hopes that licensing will mean that the environments in which collection takes place will meet the highest possible standards and so help to ensure that every sample has the best possible chance of providing a high volume of stem cells. However, Future Health's Director, Roger Dainty, is concerned that if the additional processes, time and money involved in obtaining the new licences are considered excessive by maternity units and their Trusts they will simply not apply for them. "This could effectively deny parents in that area the choice of saving or donating their child's cord blood at a time when scientific breakthroughs are expanding the potential of stem cell

medicine on a weekly basis. Incidents of fathers trying to collect cord blood themselves may reflect the struggle that many parents across the country face to secure professional collection as many Trusts will simply not allow it”.

Leading UK medical ethicist, Lady Roche, is also concerned about the regulation’s unwitting effect on parental choice. “UK parents should not be at a disadvantage in making this once-in-a-lifetime decision. I fervently hope that this new regulatory process will encourage and not discourage greater acceptance of a parent’s right to save their child’s cord blood and ensure that the Government’s long-standing promise of providing choice in maternity services is upheld.”

TV presenter and ex-Apprentice contestant, Saira Khan, who has recently stored her new baby’s cord blood with Future Health said: “Having read about cord blood stem cells and their potential, I wanted to make the choice to store a sample from my baby for the future. Fortunately I was able to arrange this but I know that other parents can face difficulties. I passionately believe that every parent should be able to make this choice so I hope that these new regulations don’t mean that the barriers go up rather than come down. It should be every parent’s right.”

About Future Health Technologies Ltd

Future Health Technologies was founded in 2002 and offers its services to over 35 different countries including the UK. As the UK’s first fully-accredited private family cord blood stem cell storage facility, with both MHRA accreditation and a substantive licence from the UK Human Tissue Authority, it has successfully stored thousands of samples and these are held at its own custom-built cryogenic storage facilities in Nottingham. UK enquiries to the company are currently running at over 300 a month, having risen from around 50 a month a few years ago.