

# Canadian Blood Services **Stem Cell Registry & Cord Blood Bank**

## COVID-19 Update

Date: June 12, 2020

Time: 11:00hrs EST

*Distribution to Stem Cell Transplant Stakeholders*



## COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells

Date: June 12, 2020

Time: 11:00hrs EST

1. **NMDP VT Requests** (blood draws still temporarily suspended due to COVID-19). The NMDP now has two options related to VT requests:
  - **Option #1 – VT request with buccal swabs:**
    - The VT appointment will include completion of a health history screening questionnaire (HHSQ) and confirm donor availability, as well as the request for the donor to provide buccal swabs to be used for testing.
    - With this new process, when you submit a VT request, NMDP will still email the results of the donor availability check and HSQ.
    - During the health check, the donor center will also be arranging collection and shipping of fresh buccal swab samples, with an appointment date provided for a completed collection.
    - The buccal swabs being collected will be split up by the NMDP/Be The Match Biorepository:
      - two being sent to the transplant center for confirmatory typing in their labs; *and*,
      - two being sent to a contracted lab for presumptive ABO/Rh and CMV testing.
  - **Option #2 – Only Health History and Availability Check at VT**
    - Effective Monday, June 15, your center can request a donor health history screening and availability check, **without** buccal swabs, at VT
    - Request this option when your center does not wish to have buccal swabs for VT and ABO/RH and CMV testing.
    - To request only the health history screening and availability check, request a VT and immediately notify the CBS Stem Cell Registry that you do not want buccal swabs sent.
    - If the NMDP does not receive the request quickly, they may not be able to stop the collection of buccal swabs at the donor center.
    - As always, the NDMP will email the completed availability check and health history screening.
    - The health history screening includes updated information on transfusions, pregnancies and weight. If a donor screens positive for COVID-19 exposure, the donor will be made temporarily unavailable.
    - For VT requests that were submitted **prior** to the start of this new process, the NMDP will confirm with the CTCs if they wish to have buccal swabs sent.
  - **Please see following Q&As below from the NMDP for additional information:**
    - **Q: What if my center does not want the buccal swabs for VT testing, but we still want ABO/Rh and CMV?**
      - **A:** We recognize that some centers only want ABO/Rh and CMV testing and we are investigating ways to accomplish this. Until that process is established, our process requires us to collect **all** samples at the same time, ship 2 to the TC and the other 2 buccal swabs to the NMDP lab to test for ABO/Rh and CMV. If you are interested in **ABO/Rh and CMV typing only**, you should **request a CT**. While additional options are being evaluated, please remember your lab is not required to complete typing on the samples you receive.



- **Q: What should I do if my lab is unable to perform typing from buccal swab samples?**

- **A:** We can perform typing at an NMDP/Be The Match lab and send the results to you if your lab cannot complete the testing. Our testing lab is ASHI accredited and the typing results will count as a VT per the NMDP/Be The Match CT policy. If you choose this option, all your VT samples will be sent to this lab and there will be an additional cost to perform the typing. **Please contact your coordinator who can confirm the price and arrange this option with the NMDP.**
- Alternatively, if your lab is interested in setting up the ability to extract DNA from buccal swabs we can assist. Please contact Dr. Neng Yu, Director of Clinical HLA, [neng.yu@nmdp.org](mailto:neng.yu@nmdp.org)

## 2. Importing Products to the US

Due to difficulties with COVID-19 border issues and restrictions between Canada and the US, the NMDP have informed CBS Stem Cell Registry that it will be necessary for them to import products from Canada as **cryopreserved** product (rather than fresh). They are in a situation where they will likely need to consider ONLY shipping products via cargo from Canada beginning mid- to end-June and for the foreseeable future. The NMDP is currently working with the US government to impact and change this situation. CBS Stem Cell Registry will work with the applicable collection centres and the NMDP to help facilitate these requests.

## 3. Provide Up-To-Date Courier Instructions

As travel restrictions and collection center restrictions continue to change throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the NMDP/Be The Match is providing couriers for the transport of product unless prior arrangements have been made. Therefore, it is extremely important for cooperative registries and collection centers to provide **up-to-date courier instructions** to your Coordinator/Case Manager. We want to make sure couriers secured by the NMDP/Be The Match can safely transport the product without delay.

## 4. Bone Marrow Collections

have resumed at most Canadian CCs, but will be assessed on a case-by-case basis at the time of the request to determine the centre's ability to accommodate.

## 5. Update from the China Marrow Donor Programme - CMDP (ION-2197)

- **Workup Requests:**

- CMDP's CC cannot cryopreserve the product. However, they could accept TCs doing the cryopreservation upon request.
- CMDP is fully operational for domestic patients; however, they cannot arrange shipment of blood samples to overseas labs until the middle of July (VT and pre-collects samples).

- **Update from OnTime – product pick-ups China:**

- At the moment, OnTime is not providing services to/from China due to the current restriction of the Chinese Government that everybody arriving in China must quarantine for two weeks. **There are no exceptions from this ruling, no waivers, handovers at the airport, etc.,** so as of June 9, a courier would need to be willing to stay two weeks in a hotel room in China **before** doing the pickup.
- OnTime contacted several colleagues in the Asian region to see if there is a possible loophole – Hong Kong has the same restriction; Korea is closed to almost everybody; the only slight possibility would be Singapore, but we would need the product to be brought to



Singapore by a CMDP staff member and the cooperation of BMDP and the Singaporean Government to arrange for a handover at Changi airport to one of our OnTime couriers. However, due to current Singaporean ruling **no Singaporean BMDP staff member** can leave Singapore for a transport.

If the donation cannot be postponed, the CBS Stem Cell Registry can reach out to Singapore and China to see if the Singapore routing is a possible solution, especially as flights to/from China are suspended for most countries around the world.

6. **Reminder** to refer to the [WMDA COVID-19 webpage](#); the following International Registries have provided updates, recently:
  - Cyprus Cyprus Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ION-9751)
  - France France Greffe De Moelle - FGM (ION-1804)
  - Finnish Stem Cell Registry - FSCR (ION-9738)
  - Israel Ezer Mizion Registry Israel Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ION-4987)
  - Israel Hadassah Registry (ION-5239)
  - India DKMS-BMST Foundation by intermediary of DKMS Registry (ION-9935)
  - South Africa South African Bone Marrow Registry (ION-8118)
  - Switzerland Blutspende SRK Schweiz (Swiss Blood Stem Cells) (ION-9341)
  - United Kingdom, Anthony Nolan (ION-6354)
  - United States Be The Match - NMDP Registry (ION-3553)
7. **E-mails Forwarded:** From May 4 to June 10, the following nine e-mails were received by CBS Stem Cells and forwarded to Canadian collection and transplant centres by Sandra Marentette, on behalf of Dr. Heidi Elmoazzen, Director, Stem Cells. If you did not receive any of the below, please contact [sandra.marentette@blood.ca](mailto:sandra.marentette@blood.ca) to request a copy:
  - i. E-mail forwarded on May 4, 11:54 AM EST: **COVID-19 operations statement of the Romanian Registry (RNDVCSH - ION 1372) as of 30 April 2020**. Received from the Romanian National Registry of Hematopoietic Stem Cells Voluntary Donors.
  - ii. E-mail forwarded on May 4, 3:49 PM EST: **WMDA Rapid Alert**. Received from the WMDA.
  - iii. E-mail forwarded on May 12, 7:53 AM EST: **2020-05-12 Support from DKMS in times of COVID-19**. Received from DKMS.
  - iv. E-mail forwarded on June 1, 3:39 PM EST: **Hadassah BMR**. Received from the Hadassah Bone Marrow and CB registry.
  - v. E-mail forwarded on June 2, 12:20 PM EST: **2020-06-02 - BMDP: Updates on VT services**. Received from the Bone Marrow Donor Programme of Singapore.
  - vi. E-mail forwarded on June 2, 12:28 PM EST: **2020-06-02 - REDOME INFORMATION 007/2020: Cryopreservation service**. Received from REDOME.
  - vii. E-mail forwarded on June 8, 2:13 PM EST: **2020-06-08 - BMDP updates on COVID-19 Test at WU**. Received from the Bone Marrow Donor Programme of Singapore.
  - viii. E-mail forwarded on June 10, 11:08 AM EST: **2020-06-10 - Taiwan - Buddhist Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center**. Received from the Buddhist Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center.
  - ix. E-mail forwarded on June 10, 11:15 AM EST: **2020-06-10 - Update from Thai National Stem Cell Donor Registry**. Received from the Thai National Stem Cell Donor Registry.

## OTHER / CONTACT INFORMATION

CBS will continue to monitor this rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation and update you of any changes.



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## **Stem Cell Registry & Cord Blood Bank**

COVID-19 UPDATE

WMDA Share website has comprehensive updates from international registries: [WMDA COVID-19 webpage](#)

If you require additional assistance regarding a patient search, including cord blood, please reach out to the search team at [search.analyst@blood.ca](mailto:search.analyst@blood.ca)

If you have any additional questions that are not covered by these updates, please contact Gail Morris at [gail.morris@blood.ca](mailto:gail.morris@blood.ca)

**- End Update, June 12, 2020 -**



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Stem Cell Registry & Cord Blood Bank

COVID-19 UPDATE

## COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells

Date: April 24, 2020

Time: 10:00hrs EST

### 1. CRYOPRESERVATION SUPPORT NOW AVAILABLE

The CBS Ottawa Stem Cell processing lab can now offer some support to transplant programs for the cryopreservation of their unrelated adult donor products. The CBS Stem Cell team is available as a backup/contingency option, depending upon our capacity to meet demand.

If you have any questions, or would like support, please contact either/or:

- [mike.halpenny@blood.ca](mailto:mike.halpenny@blood.ca), Mike Halpenny, Manager, Stem Cell Manufacturing
- [nicholas.dibdin@blood.ca](mailto:nicholas.dibdin@blood.ca), Nick Dibdin, Associate Director, Stem Cell Operations

### 2. INTERNATIONAL REGISTRY UPDATES

**E-mails Forwarded:** From April 3 to April 15, the following three (3) e-mails were received by CBS Stem Cells and forwarded to Canadian collection and transplant centres by Sandra Marentette, on behalf of Dr. Heidi Elmoazzen, Director, Stem Cells. If you did not receive any of the below, please contact [sandra.marentette@blood.ca](mailto:sandra.marentette@blood.ca) to request a copy:

- x. E-mail forwarded on April 3, 3:21 PM EST: ***EBMT-WMDA: COVID-19 and unrelated donor grafts - live webinar Monday, April 6, 2020.*** Received from EBMT Communications.
- xi. E-mail forwarded on April 7, 1:23 PM EST: ***Important Info: DKMS policy update on higher cell count requests and other COVID-19-related process change.*** Received from DKMS.
- xii. E-mail forwarded on April 15, 3:51 PM EST: ***EBMT-WMDA webinar slide deck, "How to ensure unrelated donor grafts and CAR-T Cell Products during the Corona pandemic".*** Presented by representatives from EBMT, WMDA, Anthony Nolan, and DKMS.

### OTHER / CONTACT INFORMATION

CBS will continue to monitor this rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation and update you of any changes.

WMDA Share website has comprehensive updates from international registries:

<https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF>

If you require additional assistance regarding a patient search, including cord blood, please reach out to the search team at [search.analyst@blood.ca](mailto:search.analyst@blood.ca)

If you have any additional questions that are not covered by these updates, please contact Gail Morris at [gail.morris@blood.ca](mailto:gail.morris@blood.ca)

- End Update, April 24, 2020 -



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COVID-19 UPDATE

## **COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells**

**Date: April 3, 2020**

**Time: 10:00hrs EST**

### **1. PRACTICE CORD BLOOD UNITS AVAILABLE**

Given increasing limitations/ability to obtain stem cells from bone marrow and peripheral blood due to a variety of reasons including donor availability, travel restrictions, collection centre capacity, etc., cord blood units may be a viable option.

As a result, CBS is considering implementing a process for Canadian transplant centres that do not currently perform stem cell transplants using cord blood units to begin exploring this opportunity.

**In the meantime, please reach out to us indicating your interest** by contacting Mike Halpenny, Manager, Manufacturing, Stem Cells, [mike.halpenny@blood.ca](mailto:mike.halpenny@blood.ca)

### **2. CRYOPRESERVATION SURVEY RESULTS**

Thank you to all collection centres that took the time to fill out our recent cryopreservation capacity survey. The results of the survey indicate that most collection centres have the capacity to cryopreserve product before distribution, but there are a few that cannot. CBS is currently investigating our capacity to help facilitate those centres that cannot cryopreserve and will provide an update soon.

### **3. UPDATE re. Cryopreservation of Unrelated Adult Donor Products Highly Recommended (first indicated in the March 17, update)**

Cryopreserving products is recommended, and Canadian Blood Services can assist in managing this process. All requests for cryopreservation of Canadian Blood Services donor products will be approved until further notice. Some international registries still require medical approval and/or consent from the donor. **Please submit all requests for cryopreservation as per the usual process – send request via SCNSS with details including the reason, patient status and patient preparation and infusion dates (planned or tentative).**

### **4. SUSPENDING BONE MARROW COLLECTION**

On March 27, the decision was made during the Stem Cell Expert Advisory Committee (SCEAC) teleconference call for collection centres in Canada to suspend collecting bone marrow (HPC-M) from unrelated donors until further notice. This decision was made because access to operating rooms, use of anesthetic machines and personal protective equipment for marrow harvests are in all question due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 30, Canadian Blood Services informed the international community via the WMDA Share website.

### **5. INTERNATIONAL REGISTRY UPDATES**

**E-mails Forwarded:** From March 30 to April 1, the following seven (7) e-mails were received by CBS Stem Cells and forwarded to Canadian collection and transplant centres by Sandra Marentette, on behalf of Dr. Heidi Elmoazzen, Director, Stem Cells. If you did not receive any of the below, please contact [sandra.marentette@blood.ca](mailto:sandra.marentette@blood.ca) to request a copy:



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## Stem Cell Registry & Cord Blood Bank

COVID-19 UPDATE

- xiii. E-mail forwarded on March 30, 8:20 AM EST: ***DKMS Policy on Bone Marrow Collection and Unstimulated Leukapheresis (DLI) requests during COVID Pandemic.*** Received from DKMS.
- xiv. E-mail forwarded on March 30, 10:25 AM EST: ***Response to COVID-19 – 3/27/20 Update.*** Received from NMDP.
- xv. E-mail forwarded on March 31, 5:32 PM EST: ***COVID-19 measures: Blood Sample requests for international patient – INT.*** Received from Marrow Donor Program Belgium.
- xvi. E-mail forwarded on March 31, 5:43 PM EST: ***Ezer Mizion operations update 2020-03-31.*** Received from Ezer Mizion BMDR.
- xvii. E-mail forwarded on April 1, 9:26 AM EST: ***COVID-19 operations statement of the French Registry (FGM) as of 30 march 2020.*** Received from the French Unrelated Stem Cell Donors Registry.
- xviii. E-mail forwarded on April 1, 9:49 AM EST: ***COVID-19 Update from Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry.*** Received from the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry.
- xix. E-mail forwarded on April 1, 11:50 AM EST: ***Guidelines for traveling to Thailand (Announced by CAAT March 19, 2020).*** Received from the Thai National Stem Cell Donor Registry.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

CBS will continue to monitor this rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation and update you of any changes.

WMDA Share website – centralized information: <https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF>

If you require additional assistance regarding a patient search, including cord blood, please reach out to the search team at [search.analyst@blood.ca](mailto:search.analyst@blood.ca).

If you have any additional questions that are not covered by these updates, please contact Gail Morris at [gail.morris@blood.ca](mailto:gail.morris@blood.ca).

**- End Update, April 3, 2020 -**





## COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells

Date: March 27, 2020

Time: 12:00hrs EST

### 1. DONOR PROXIMITY TO COLLECTION CENTRES AND BACKUP PLANNING

The following is to provide more detail around the process for determining donor proximity (item #3 from the March 20, update further below):

- Transplant centres can provide CBS with a list of potential Canadian donors for each patient from the search report.
- CBS will determine based on that list, which collection centre the donor is closest to, if the donor can drive there or if air travel is required and if the donor must travel out of province or not. This information will allow the transplant centre to select donors with the highest chance of navigating the current restrictions that are in place. In addition, potential collection centres will be monitored continuously to understand any limitations that exist regarding the ability to accommodate collections. Please see example below.

**Collection centre provides a list of interested donors to CBS:**

001 0/0/0	■ 5103 0001 0021 5792 824	17 M CAU	2020-01 AV	173 75	AAAAA 100% - 0%
002 0/0/0	■ 5103 0001 0018 0088 013	21 M CAU	2018-01 RS	170 68	AAAAA 100% - 0%
003 0/0/0	■ 5103 0001 0016 6969 921	23 M CAU	2017-06 AV	183 88	AAAAA 100% - 0%
004 0/0/0	■ 5103 0002 0018 3724 029	35 M FN	2016-11 AV	191 104	AAAAA 100% - 0%

**CBS provides the donor commitment list with updated information if applicable:**

**5103 0001 0018 1673 122 – 25 min drive to CC – TOH**  
**5103 0001 0016 0476 215 – 4.5 hour drive to CC – QEII**  
**5103 0001 0017 2375 512 – 30 min drive to CC – QEII**  
**5103 0001 0018 4600 915 – 1 hour 15 minute drive to CC – QEII**  
**5103 0002 0024 2609 016 – 1 hour drive to CC – TOH**  
**5103 0001 0018 8985 914 – 2 hour drive to CC – QEII**  
**5103 0002 0026 9304 910 – 4 hour drive to CC – QEII**

CBS will contact selected donors and confirm availability and perform a wellness check and complete a preliminary health screening questionnaire to increase confidence that the donor can proceed to collection (see below regarding revisions to VT testing).



## 2. CBS REGISTRY UPDATES

**Verification Typing (VT):** The following is to provide more detail around the change to the VT request process (item #4 from the March 20, update further below):

- **Can I still order verification typing of unrelated donors from CBS Stem Cell Registry?**  
No, you will now initiate a 'Reservation Request'. The registry will then contact the donor, complete the HSQ, review the donation process, confirm willingness to donate if requested for WU. If donor is deferred or not able/willing to proceed with donation, we will cancel the reservation request. If donor is willing to remain on hold and willing to donate, we will send you any donor information that may be a risk to the patient.
- **Can I still request extended HLA (eHLA) of donors in the SCNSS?**  
You can still request eHLA; however, testing will only proceed if the donor has a stored sample available for testing. We are not able to accommodate eHLA testing if the donor requires a new buccal swab as we are not able to prepare the buccal swab KITS to send to the donor at this time.
- **Can I still order verification typing (VT) from international registries?**  
Yes, you can still submit VT requests for some INT donors, but please check the WMDA coronavirus webpage to confirm if the particular registry is still proceeding with full VTs (<https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF>). Some registries have suspended VT requests, others are not going to be sending samples, but will still contact donors and do the HSQ etc.
- **How will previous VT requests be managed that will not have a blood sample drawn?** We will be communicating directly with each of the applicable transplant centres via email to request that you send a reservation request for these donors if you are still interested; if not you can cancel the VT request (a list of the donors will be provided).

**Health Screening:** Four additional coronavirus screening questions for the Registry were implemented on March 23, 2020, as an addendum to the current questionnaire, as follows:

- i. In the past 28 days, have you been diagnosed with 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) or suspected of having this infection?
- ii. In the past 28 days, have you been in close contact, such as living with or caring for anyone diagnosed with coronavirus?
- iii. In the past 28 days, have you traveled to or lived in a country assigned by the CDC with a Level 3 warning risk for coronavirus?
- iv. In the upcoming 2 months, do you plan to travel to a country assigned by the CDC with a Level 3 warning risk for coronavirus?

If a donor is found to be at risk of COVID-19 infection, CBS will notify the transplant centre.

## 3. INTERNATIONAL REGISTRY UPDATES

**E-mails Forwarded:** From March 23 to 26, the following seven (7) e-mails were received by CBS Stem Cells and forwarded to Canadian collection and transplant centres by Sandra Marentette, on behalf of Dr. Heidi Elmoazzen, Director, Stem Cells. If you did not receive any of the below, please contact [sandra.marentette@blood.ca](mailto:sandra.marentette@blood.ca) to request a copy:



- xx. E-mail forwarded on March 23, 6:56 PM EST: ***New TC requirement for unrelated donor products.*** Received from NMDP.
- xxi. E-mail forwarded on March 23, 7:03 PM EST: ***Important information: DKMS offers Health & Availability Check.*** Received from DKMS.
- xxii. E-mail forwarded on March 23, 7:06 PM EST: ***Update for Fundacja DKMS registry in Poland.*** Received from DKMS Poland.
- xxiii. E-mail forwarded on March 24, 9:02 AM EST: ***Change to confirmatory typing process.*** Received from NMDP.
- xxiv. E-mail forwarded on March 26, 9:30 AM EST: ***COVID-19 update from Anthony Nolan.*** Received from Anthony Nolan.
- xxv. E-mail forwarded on March 26, 12:50 PM EST: ***Important information about operation of DKMS-BMST Foundation India.*** Received from DKMS.
- xxvi. E-mail forwarded on March 26, 7:29 PM EST: ***Please reserve requests for bone marrow for patients in greatest need during the COVID-19 pandemic.*** Received from NMDP.

**NMDP Cryopreservation Requests:** On behalf of Canadian transplant centres for NDMP donor collections:

- NMDP is consolidating AC/CC cryopreservation requests and activity to a lab at Duke University in North Carolina (SE United States), rather than asking individual AC/CCs to perform these procedures and shipments.
- NMDP would arrange for the fresh product to be delivered from the AC to the Duke lab for cryopreservation, Duke would cryopreserve, and then NMDP would arrange for the cryo-shipper to be delivered to the Canadian TC. The TC would return the empty shipper to Duke.
- NMDP will only be cryopreserving products when the transplant centre absolutely cannot cryopreserve in their own facility. The NMDP has limits on capacity to do cryopreservations.
- When there is an urgent need for the NMDP to cryopreserve the product for the transplant centre, this will be the process:
  1. NMDP will reach out the collection center to see if they can cryopreserve the product.
  2. If no, NMDP will reach out to their BioBank to see if they are able to cryopreserve the product.
  3. If the NMDP is able to confirm cryopreservation at the collection center or BioBank, the NMDP will coordinate the transport for your transplant centre via the CBS Stem Cell Registry.

#### 4. COURIER INFORMATION

**World Courier: Shipping Fresh Products (*Information from the Tom Baker Cancer Centre*)**



- World Courier has Credo coolers for shipping available. These are similar to the Credo coolers that most of the courier services use for transport of fresh products. They are validated and hold temperature at 2-6°C for long periods.
- World courier can drop off the shipper to the collection centre at time of collection.
- The boxes have data loggers to record temperature and GPS for tracking by World Courier.
- Also, there is tamper evident sealing tape that seals the box to clearly indicate any tampering during transport.
- A packing quick reference guide for the cooler boxes can be provided to the collection centre prior to collection.
- The Tom Baker Cancer Centre (TBCC) has used World Courier for shipping of cryopreserved products for many years with great success.
- Recently TBCC has used World Courier for shipping of fresh Autologous HPC(A) or MNC(A) products for clinical trials (gene therapy, CAR-T). The Credo shipping boxes are the same and so packing is very much the same as our courier coolers. The products have always arrived on time and in excellent condition.
- To request this service or for any other inquiries please contact **Paul Leonidasxz** - [pleonidasxz@worldcourier.ca](mailto:pleonidasxz@worldcourier.ca) or mobile at (604 417-4164).

#### **World Courier: Shipping Frozen Products**

- World Courier provides validated dry shippers as part of their shipping reservations if specifically requested. These shippers come with temperature monitoring devices. For order forms and general inquiries, please contact **Ed Fenwick** - [efenwick@worldcourier.ca](mailto:efenwick@worldcourier.ca) or mobile (289) 644-2747.

#### **Update for Couriers Entering Canada, in General**

- The government of Canada issued updated documents for couriers to use for entering Canada from a country **other than the United States**. As a friendly reminder, transplant centres provide the two (2) documents to the couriers, as needed. The documents are as follows and can be found on the WMDA website at: <https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF>
  - Attachment 1: *Order in Council permitting foreign nationals entry into Canada for the purpose of making medical deliveries of stem cells required for patient care*
  - Attachment 2: *Letter of exemption for Medical Deliveries from the Canadian government*
- For couriers arriving **from the United States**, transplant centres must provide one (1) document to the courier. This document is as follows and can be found on the WMDA website at <https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF>
  - Attachment 2: *Letter of exemption for Medical Deliveries from the Canadian government*
  - **Please note that any US courier must not have been outside Canada or the United States in the last 14 days from the date of entry into Canada.**
- Canadian Customs:
  - Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) has received a copy of the exemption and therefore are aware of its existence
  - The custom agent has a direct telephone number to CBSA to validate the information if they have questions or concerns
  - Quarantine agents of CBSA that are present at each airport (those receiving international travelers) that work with custom agents, have also received the information on the exemption;
  - If problems arise, the courier can communicate with Canadian Blood Services, so that we can help manage any issues with the CBSA agent and resolve the situation.
- Airlines:
  - Transport Canada is aware of the exemption
  - Transport Canada will relay this information to the airlines



- If couriers have any issues with the airline, they can communicate with Canadian Blood Services and we can try and mitigate the issue through CBSA.
- Air carriers must conduct a health check of every person prior to boarding a flight to Canada. Anyone refusing to cooperate will not be permitted to board the plane.
- No foreign national will be admitted into Canada if they exhibit the following symptoms:
  - a fever;
  - a cough; and
  - breathing difficulties.

## 5. TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

Nova Scotia **requires** individuals who have travelled anywhere outside of the province to self-isolate for 14 days after arrival into the province. Nova Scotia has exempted essential emergency personnel while carrying out their duties and responsibilities (e.g. medical supply personnel). (Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island have also implemented similar restrictions which should not impact stem cell deliveries). Manitoba has issued a **recommendation** to self-isolate for 14 days after travel from outside the province and has exempted individuals transporting goods. New Brunswick has prohibited all unnecessary travel into the province.

## 6. CRYOPRESERVATION SURVEY

With the recent recommendations from the WMDA and various stem cell registries during the COVID-19 pandemic to cryopreserve unrelated donor stem cell products and ensure their safe delivery to transplant centres prior to the start of patient conditioning, CBS is taking a survey to gather information to assess each Canadian collection centres' capability to cryopreserve products on behalf of transplant centres.

This survey was sent by e-mail to the seven Canadian collection centres on March 26, at 11:53 AM by Sandra Marentette, on behalf of Dr. Heidi Elmoazzen, Director, Stem Cells.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

CBS will continue to monitor this rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation and update you of any changes.

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If you require additional assistance regarding a patient search, including cord blood, please reach out to the search team at [search.analyst@blood.ca](mailto:search.analyst@blood.ca).

If you have any additional questions, please contact Gail Morris at [gail.morris@blood.ca](mailto:gail.morris@blood.ca).

**- End Update, March 27, 2020 -**



## COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells

Date: March 20, 2020

Time: 16:00hrs EST

Dear Colleagues,

Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry and Cord Blood Bank continue to maintain essential operations. Key aspects of the supply chain are being maintained by staff either on site as required for specific roles, or from home. The following updates are provided:

### 1. DONOR POST-DONATION FOLLOW-UP

- The case manager contacts the donor within 48 hours after the donation to complete the *Donor Recovery Survey*, and then weekly until the donor has fully recovered or the donor declines further follow-up.
- The case manager reviews the following information with the donor during the Information Session (pre-donation) and at the initial post-donation follow-up:
  - Request reporting of any health changes within 4 days after the donation (**any health issues reported that may affect the health of the patient must be reported to the transplant centre**)
  - Reinforce the requirement for a follow-up appointment – by phone – with a General Practitioner (GP) 2 weeks after HPC, marrow donation.
- We are now also following-up with donors 14 days after the collection to confirm if they have developed any illness or symptoms of COVID-19
- The donor is also sent a post-donation survey after the donation. Any concerns or issues are forwarded to Manager, Donor Services.

### 2. COURIER INFORMATION

#### Documents for Entering Canada

- Transplant centres are responsible for providing the two (2) documents to the couriers, as needed. The documents are as follows and can be found on the WMDA website at: <https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF>
  - Government-of-Canada\_Update-to-Section-58-of-the-Quarantine-Act
  - CANADA-Essential-Service-Exemption-Letter\_Persons-Making-Urgent-Medical-Deliveries
- Canadian Customs:
  - Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) has received a copy of the exemption and therefore are aware of its existence
  - The custom agent has a direct telephone number to CBSA to validate the information if they have questions or concerns
  - Quarantine agents of CBSA that are present at each airport (those receiving international travelers) that work with custom agents, have also received the information on the exemption;
  - If problems arise, the courier can communicate with Canadian Blood Services, so that we can help manage any issues with the CBSA agent and resolve the situation.
- Airlines:
  - Transport Canada is aware of the exemption
  - Transport Canada will relay this information to the airlines



- If couriers have any issues with the airline, they can communicate with Canadian Blood Services and we can try and mitigate the issue through CBSA.

#### **OnTime Courier**

- OnTime Courier is planning transports for Canada from Germany/Europe via London Heathrow airport.

#### **ZKRD**

Transport, Import and Export:

- For products involving **DKMS donors**, if a courier is experiencing problems at the German border when entering or leaving Germany, call this mobile number: **+49 174 192 59 36**
- For products from **all other German donor centers**, please call the following number of ZKRD's Transport Management for assistance if you experience difficulties at the German border: **+49 731 1507 201**
- Please note: Currently ZKRD is only accepting couriers from OnTime and time:matters for pick-ups to or from international centers. Despite controlled access at the borders to Austria, Switzerland, Denmark and France, ground transport of stem cells is still possible.

### **3. DONOR PROXIMITY TO COLLECTION CENTRES AND BACKUP PLANNING**

Use of Canadian donors for Canadian patients offers a potential strategy to reduce the transmission of the COVID-19 and other transmissible diseases. Capacity at collection centres is stretched due to restrictions related to the outbreak and donors have expressed reluctance to travel to collection centres that are far away.

Selection of donors that are close to collection centres offers the best opportunity to provide stem cell products to patients in need. Finding a HLA compatible donor that lives close to a collection centre is not common. We strongly encourage collection centers to make every effort to accommodate this potentially life-saving procedure to complete these collections for our patients. Collection prescriptions should, where possible, be in a single collection procedure. The same effort from all collection centres will offer the best chances for our patients across the country.

### **4. REGISTRY UPDATES**

#### **Canadian Blood Services**

Verification Typing: As of 2020-03-19, we will no longer be performing verification typing (VT), or "samples only" requests, until further notice to ensure the safety of donors and minimize the risk of community transmission of COVID-19; this is in addition to the current challenges in scheduling and shipping samples. You can submit a **'Reservation Request'** and we will contact the donor to complete the Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ), review the donation process and confirm their commitment to proceeding with donation. Transplant centres will be able to request simultaneous VT/Work-up to complete the VT and IDM testing. For any VT requests currently in process, we will cancel any upcoming sample appointments; for any new requests we have received we will proceed as above by contacting donor, completing the HSQ and reviewing the donation information.

#### **NMDP**

**NMDP/Be The Match requires that a backup plan exist for all cases where cryopreservation is not being planned.** The NMDP/Be The Match HLA Search Strategy team will review patient cases and provide a comparable backup option when possible via your case manager. A backup plan could be another unrelated donor, cord blood unit(s), related donor or haploidentical donor. If your center already has a backup plan in place, please let your Case Manager know.





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## **Stem Cell Registry & Cord Blood Bank**

COVID-19 UPDATE

### **DKMS**

- Quarantine and testing of stem cell products for COVID-19 – **not required**
  - No evidence of transmission via blood, bone marrow or stem cell products
  - DKMS endorses FDA & AABB recommendation to not quarantine or test stem cell products
- Special Permits have been obtained for couriers to transport blood stem cell products to U.S.
- Are considering the circumstances of all their donors asked to donate
  - Will ensure the best and safest solution possible
  - Implemented COVID-19 screening of their donors before entry to collection centres & start of donation

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

CBS will continue to monitor this rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation and update you of any changes.

WMDA Share website – centralized information: <https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF>

If you require additional assistance regarding a patient search, including cord blood, please reach out to the search team at [search.analyst@blood.ca](mailto:search.analyst@blood.ca).

If you have any additional questions, please contact Gail Morris at [gail.morris@blood.ca](mailto:gail.morris@blood.ca).

**- End Update, March 20, 2020 -**





## **COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells**

**Date: March 17, 2020**

**Time: 09:00**

Dear Colleagues,

Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry and Cord Blood Bank are maintaining essential operations. Key aspects of the supply chain are being maintained by staff either on site as required for specific roles, or from home.

We provide you with the following updates.

### **1. WMDA Share Website re. Verification Typing and Workup**

The WMDA is providing information from a centralized, online location related to verification typing and workup, covering such areas as:

- Geographical risk – donors returning from a risk area
- Geographical risk – donors residing in a risk area
- Contact with 2019-nCoV – donors who report contact with a confirmed case
- History of 2019-nCoV infection
- Additional 2019-nCoV questions
- Rationales

WMDA Website: <https://share.wmda.info/display/DMSR/Coronavirus++COVID-19#/>

### **2. Canadian Blood Services Health Screening**

On March 8, 2020, a new travel question was implemented for stem cells: “Have you travelled outside Canada, the continental US or Europe in the last 21 days?”. For Registry donors, travel history within 21 days outside Canada, US and Europe will be reported to the transplant centres, and for cord blood donations will result in a deferral.

Additional coronavirus screening questions for the Registry will be implemented as an addendum to the current questionnaire as soon as operationally possible. For cord blood, there were no additional questions/adjustments, as the collection hospitals were already screening for COVID-19 risk, and anyone identified as a risk was deferred from donating cord blood.

### **3. Cord Blood Bank Collections, Availability and Selection Support Service**

As of March 16, at 23:00, following new recommendations from the public health department, Canadian Blood Services' Cord Blood Bank is suspending collections until further notice to contribute to the collective efforts in limiting the spread of COVID-19.

Searching, matching and distribution of cord blood units is fully operational. In addition to search requests for an unrelated adult stem cell donor, we remind transplant centres that cord blood units can be included in your search should you have the capacity to perform cord blood transplants. Cord blood units remain readily available, were collected before the COVID-19 outbreak and are not currently limited to travel restrictions. If interested, request a cord blood unit search report when initiating a patient search. We recommend ordering cord blood units as far in advance as possible to ensure timely delivery.



As well, the WMDA has established a Cord Blood Selection Support Service. Details about how to utilize this service are available here: <https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF>.

#### **4. Courier Services**

As courier services become disrupted and/or compromised, our team can assist with providing support and recommendations to help ensure the safe delivery of stem cell products to transplant centres.

Transplant centres may wish to consider having couriers hand-over the product at the airport and/or outside of the hospital. We are working with our logistics colleagues at Canadian Blood Services and Hema-Quebec to assist with logistical challenges.

#### **5. Cryopreservation of Unrelated Adult Donor Products Highly Recommended**

Cryopreserving products is recommended, and Canadian Blood Services can assist in managing this process. All requests for cryopreservation of Canadian Blood Services donor products will be approved until further notice. Some international registries still require medical approval and/or consent from the donor. Please submit all requests for cryopreservation as per the usual process.

#### **6. Donor Proximity to Collection Centres and Backup Planning**

If there are several suitable Canadian donors available, we may be able to assist, upon request, with donors who are in closer proximity to a collection centre to limit donor travel; however, this will be dependant on collection centre and donor availability.

In terms of donor availability, we may see challenges, and encourage transplant centres to work closely with our case managers including identifying a backup donor/product whenever possible. This can include additional unrelated adult donors, cord blood unit(s), related donor or haploidentical donor.

Transplant centres may want to consider delaying transplant for non-urgent cases, as well as prioritizing use of domestic adult unrelated donors and cord blood products given the evolving logistical challenges.

#### **7. Donor Recruitment – Events and Online**

All donor recruitment 'events' are suspended until further notice. All donors are being asked to register online at [www.blood.ca/registry](http://www.blood.ca/registry) to receive a buccal swab kit in the mail and return for processing. We are increasing messaging to optimal donors to sign-up to the Registry now, more than ever, to help meet the needs of Canadian patients.

#### **8. Travel Restrictions**

To date, there are no known travel restrictions *within* Canada, and we continue to monitor this closely. All travel restrictions can be found here: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>.

As of March 18, international flights will be permitted to land only at the international airports in Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, issued a statement in which he announced that Canada is barring entry to all travelers who are not Canadian citizens, permanent residents or Americans. There does not seem to be any restriction for Canadians leaving the country, but no person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will be allowed to board a plane to Canada and air operators will be required to complete a basic health assessment of every passenger based on guidelines from the



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## **Stem Cell Registry & Cord Blood Bank**

COVID-19 UPDATE

Public Health Agency of Canada. All returning travelers will have to undergo a 14-day isolation period prior to resuming normal activities. These measures will be in place until further notice, but the Prime Minister warns that they are subject to change as the situation progresses. Canadian Blood Services is working closely with Hema-Quebec and courier services to find solutions to minimize the impact on international stem cell transportation and will provide updates on the situation.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

CBS will continue to monitor this rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation and update you of any changes.

WMDA Share website – centralized information: <https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF>

If you require additional assistance regarding a patient search, including cord blood, please reach out to the search team at [search.analyst@blood.ca](mailto:search.analyst@blood.ca).

If you have any additional questions, please contact Gail Morris at [gail.morris@blood.ca](mailto:gail.morris@blood.ca).

**- End Update, March 17, 2020 -**