

DONOR  
LEAVE  
SAVES  
LIVES

# DONOR LEAVE LEGISLATION WILL SAVE LIVES

**DONOR LEAVE LEGISLATION WILL ALLOW MORE VOLUNTEERS  
TO SAY YES WHEN THEY GET THE CALL TO BE  
A LIFE-SAVING MATCH FOR A PATIENT IN NEED.**

## Answering the call to save a life should not impact your job.

National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP)/Be The Match® supports donor job protection to reduce barriers to donating bone marrow and blood stem cells by ensuring employees can take time off to save a life.

A national donor job protection law will allow up to 40 non-consecutive hours of leave to donate, emphasizing job protections and leave options outside of donors' established paid time off or sick leave. Donor leave legislation would clarify that bone marrow donation is a qualifying event for coverage under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), but does not expand the types of businesses that must provide leave to employees beyond employers already subject to the FMLA.

## HOW IT WORKS:

When donors join the Nation's Registry, they are ready and willing to potentially save a searching patient. Once they get the call, they must be able to say yes without fear of losing their job to give that patient another chance at life.

Transplant is often the last treatment option that patients and doctors consider to save a patient's life. They may find only one fully matched donor and must hope that person is available to donate. Donors are asked to spend approximately 40 hours away from work, spread over several weeks, in preparation to potentially save a patient's life.

## DONOR LEAVE LEGISLATION IS...

- ✓ **LOW-COST:** Donor job protection legislation has little to no fiscal impact on employers or states.<sup>1</sup> Each year, fewer than 10,000 potential donors nationwide are called on as a match and may need time off to be someone's second chance at life. Employers of those life-saving donors should be able to look to a simple, national solution, like a nationwide donor leave policy, to support their employees' donation without impacting their business.
- ✓ **FAIR:** Donor leave legislation would amend the FMLA to make sure bone marrow and blood stem cell donors have the same access to leave and job protections as donors of solid organs. Solid organ donors are eligible for the FMLA protections because their overnight hospital stay is a qualifying event. In contrast, an overnight stay is not necessary for bone marrow and blood stem cell transplants, so these donors do not enjoy the same job protections.
- ✓ **UNIFORM:** A nationwide law ensures all patients have uniform and equal access to transplant regardless of where their donor lives or works. Patients are impacted when their best matching donor resides in a state without donor job protections.

**WHY IS A FEDERAL  
STANDARD NEEDED?**



**ONLY ONE IN TEN DONORS IS  
IN THE SAME STATE AS THEIR  
RECEIVING PATIENT.**

<sup>1</sup> According to data from the Federal Government, Maryland, Virginia, Missouri, Wisconsin, Kansas and New York.

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## How would a donor job protection policy help blood cancer and blood disease patients?

*A national donor job protection solution is needed to provide all patients with uniform and equal access to transplant.*



Until now, potential bone marrow and blood stem cell donors have relied on a patchwork of state laws to protect their jobs while giving life-saving cells. Donors and patients often do not reside in the same state or even the same region of the country. A national donor job protection solution would ensure uniform and equal access to transplant, regardless of where their donor lives or works.



Additionally, patients are matched by their genetic background, which means patients and donors usually share the same race and ethnicity. The likelihood a patient has a fully matched donor on the Registry varies from 29% for Black patients to 79% for white patients.

Black & African American, Asian & Pacific Islander, Hispanic & Latino, and Native American donors have reported more barriers to donating. Because patients are matched at a genetic level, this leaves patients from the same ethnic background with fewer donor options.

***Patients who have a harder time finding a match on the Registry are further impacted by their potential matches not having the same access to time off work or job protections for donating.***



Studies show that younger donors, between the ages of 18-40, provide better long-term survival rates for patients. While they are ideal cell donors, this age group is the most vulnerable to donor leave issues. Being early in their careers, these essential young donors have less job security and time off benefits, leaving their jobs at risk and making it harder for them to say yes when called to save a life.



Photo: Dorothea, during her blood stem cell donation.

## MEET DOROTHEA

**August 30, 2017 is a day that holds incredible meaning for Dorothea Staursky. It is the anniversary of when she signed up for the Be The Match Registry.**

For the Alabama resident, signing up to be a potential donor was a commitment she took very seriously. "I joined knowing that one day I could maybe be called upon to help save a life," Dorothea said.

That day came in 2018 when Dorothea first got the call that she was identified as a potential match that October. "I was honestly a little overwhelmed and had so many questions," she said. "But, was excited and blessed to have the opportunity to possibly help this patient."

Dorothea completed her first peripheral blood stem cell (PBSC) donation in November 2018 and donated a second time for her recipient in June 2019. These experiences have given her new perspective on life.

"For me, empathy starts with imagination," she said. "I imagined myself, a family member, colleague, or a friend as a patient waiting for a match in order to live."

With a career as a healthcare professional, Dorothea said her PBSC donations to her recipient give her work new meaning.

"He is why I hope to positively change healthcare policy," she said. "He is why I work to improve hospital operations. He is why we must make efforts to provide patients with accessible and quality care, and the best possible outcome."