

For Immediate Release

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National Marrow Donor Program/Be The Match Praises the Senate for Passing Bill Reauthorizing the C.W. Bill Young Transplantation Program

Bipartisan and Unanimous Action Protects Access to Life Saving Bone Marrow and Cord Blood Transplants

MINNEAPOLIS-December 14, 2020: The United States Senate passed the TRANSPLANT Act (H.R. 4764), which provides for the reauthorization of the C.W. Bill Young Transplantation Program (Program).

“We thank the sponsor of the Senate bill, Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), and the bipartisan support of the bill’s lead cosponsors Sens. Richard Burr (R-NC), Tina Smith (D-MN), and Tim Scott (R-SC) for their efforts on behalf of this life-saving legislation,” said NMDP/Be The Match Chief Policy Officer Brian Lindberg.

The Program provides access to live-saving bone marrow, peripheral blood stem cell (PBSC) and cord blood transplants to those living with one of the more than 70 blood cancers or blood disorders for which a transplant is the only curative option.

Since its inception in the mid-1980s, NMDP/Be The Match has been entrusted by Congress to operate the Program and has facilitated more than 100,000 life-saving transplants to give patients with otherwise fatal blood cancers or blood disorders a second chance at life.

The House unanimously approved the bill (414-0) sponsored by Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA) and her lead cosponsors Reps. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Chellie Pingree (D-ME) on September 30, 2020. With the Senate action, the bill now goes to the President to be signed into Public Law.

“We understand how challenging it is to move legislation during the current pandemic, let alone in a bipartisan manner and with unanimous support,” continued Lindberg. “Passage today is a testament to the importance of the work of the Program and to the committed bipartisan champions of that work in the Senate.”

Lindberg thanked the Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) for their leadership in securing the timely Senate passage of the bill before the end of the 117th Congress. He also thanked Chairman Alexander, who will be retiring, for his longstanding support of the program.

The COVID-19 pandemic – with increasingly restrictive travel bans, border closings, and the declining availability of scheduled commercial passenger aviation service on international and domestic routes - has created unprecedented obstacles for NMDP/ Be The Match in delivering life-saving cells to the patients who need them.

This new reality creates a web of increasingly complex challenges in facilitating the timely collection and delivery of bone marrow products to patients who are in the midst of treatment protocols or whose

conditions have deteriorated to the point that a bone marrow transplant is the only course of treatment that will save their life.

“During the pandemic, we have been able to mitigate any disruption to our mission and complete more than 3,000 lifesaving therapies without missing a single delivery,” continued Lindberg. “We have been able to do that, in large part, because of our designation in Federal law as the nation’s bone marrow registry.

“Our ability to call upon our Federal partners in these extreme circumstances, and our standing in the eyes of foreign governments where we must operate, could have been compromised by a failure to reauthorize the program,” said Lindberg. “Reauthorization will allow us to ensure the timely delivery of life-saving cellular products to otherwise terminally ill patients here and throughout the world.

“We thank the Senate on behalf of every single person who will receive these life-saving and life-extending treatments, and we look forward to continuing this important work at this most critical of times,” concluded Lindberg.

About Be The Match®

For people with life-threatening blood cancers—like leukemia and lymphoma—or other diseases, a cure exists. Be The Match connects patients with their donor match for a life-saving marrow or umbilical cord blood transplant. People can contribute to the cure as a member of the Be The Match Registry®, financial contributor or volunteer. Be The Match provides patients and their families one-on-one support, education, and guidance before, during and after transplant.

Be The Match is operated by the National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP), a nonprofit organization that matches patients with donors, educates health care professionals and conducts research through its research program, CIBMTR® (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research®), so more lives can be saved. To learn more about the cure, visit [BeTheMatch.org](https://www.BeTheMatch.org) or call 1 (800) MARROW-2.