

lic banks at a cost of between \$32 000 and \$35 000 a unit, Smith says.

Worldwide, 2743 cord blood products (up from about 1800 in 2006) were shipped from 107 public cord blood banks, according to 2007 World Marrow Donor Association figures. About 40% of those units were shipped across international borders.

Canada's Stem Cell Network has endorsed the creation of a national cord blood collection initiative, provided (among other criteria) that it is operated by a nonprofit entity and given long-term funding by federal, provincial and territorial governments. Between 45% and 85% of cord blood collected is not appropriate for storage, usually because there is insufficient volume or the unit has been contaminated. These "rejected" cord blood units would be made available to Canadian researchers after appropriate ethics review and with donor consent.

"This is something that is otherwise medical waste that can truly save lives," says Smith. "The beauty of it is that it's a joy, joy situation — to give birth and to be able to donate cord to save someone's life."

Quebec, which is not a member of Canadian Blood Services, established a government-funded bank at Héma-Québec in 2004. The Quebec bank has been building inventory and is just beginning to make its cord blood available on worldwide registries.

It is proposed that the national bank be run by Canadian Blood Services. An outstanding issue has been incorporating cord blood collected at a public nonprofit bank, not funded by government, in Alberta that was established in 1996 by Dr. John Akabutu, professor of pediatrics at the University of Alberta. While his bank has collected thousands of donated cord blood units, it has been plagued with uncertain funding, and most of its cord blood has not yet been human leukocyte antigen typed for use. — Ann Silversides, *CMAJ*

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Published online at www.cmaj.ca on Jun. 10. A related story on the compatibility of private and public cord blood banks is published at www.cmaj.ca.

Briefly

Euro-mapping: Countries often branded as tourist sex destinations in Europe are net exporters of the HIV virus, according to a European research team, (www.retrovirology.com/content/pdf/1742-4690-6-49.pdf). The team tracked the movement of the virus through 17 European countries and found that Greece, Portugal, Serbia and Spain are big HIV exporters. Austria, Belgium and Luxembourg are largely importers.

Space doctor: Dr. David Saint-Jacques, clinical faculty lecturer at McGill University in Montréal, Quebec, has been chosen as one of Canada's newest astro-



Canadian Space Agency

Dr. David Saint-Jacques

nauts by the Canadian Space Agency. Saint-Jacques, a practising physician at the Innulitsivik Health Centre in Purvirnituk, northern Quebec, was born in Québec City, Que. He earned his MD in 2005 from the Université Laval in Québec City, Que. He also holds a PhD in astrophysics from Cambridge University in Cambridge, England.

Walkabout: Australian Health and Ageing Minister Nicola Roxon has unveiled an A\$134.4 million rural health package that will grant A\$15 000 to doctors who relocate from a major city to a regional centre and A\$120 000 to those relocating to very remote areas. Doctors now practising in remote areas will see retention incentives bolstered to A\$47 000 per year from A\$25 000 per year.

Manufacturing practices: Health Canada has unveiled new guidelines for good manufacturing practices for pharmaceutical, radiopharmaceutical, biological, and veterinary drugs. The department stresses, though, that the guidelines are nonbinding. "Alternative means of complying with these Regulations can be considered with the appropriate scientific justification. Different approaches may be called for as new technologies emerge" (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/alt_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/compli-conform/gmp-bfp/docs/gui-0001-eng.pdf). — Wayne Kondro, *CMAJ*

DOI:10.1503/cmaj.090929

More news at www.cmaj.ca

Residency match: The bulk of unfilled residency positions from the annual CARMS match are in Quebec. — Ann Silversides, *CMAJ*



Reuters / Richard Krause

Great leaps: China unveils its long awaited health care reform blueprint. — Katie Lewis, Beijing, China

Blood banks: Proponents of the proposed public cord blood bank contend they won't compete with private banks because their material would target genetic types. — Ann Silversides, *CMAJ*

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