



Austin News

Boy, 8, tells Texas lawmakers how stem cells cured him 📺

11:54 AM CDT on Wednesday, May 21, 2008

By **JESSICA VESS**
KVUE News

Texas lawmakers Wednesday listened to the testimony from more than half-a-dozen patients and experts regarding adult stem cell research. Medical researchers are asking the state to continue to support the use of adult stem cells.

Video



KVUE's Jessica Vess reports
05/21/2008

[More local/state video](#)

[View larger](#)

[E-mail Clip](#)

[More Video](#)

Local/State Videos

[an error occurred while processing this directive]

Texas already funds research for the cells. Just last year, it approved the creation of the Texas Cord Blood Bank that accepts donations, but survivors of transplants say more could be done. Experts say many hospitals do not collect the donations yet. Fewer than 10 actually participate.

On Wednesday speaker, Tom Craddick ordered an Interim Charge hearing. The hearing began for the Texas House Appropriations Subcommittee on Adult Stem Cell Research at 10 a.m. It is the first hearing to call for a House Interim report on the support of adult stem cell research and treatments.

Adult stem cells are often seen as a safer alternative to embryonic stem cells because the cells are taken from the blood of a living person. The cells have also shown to be more effective in medical research.

In many cases, the adult stem cells are collected from the umbilical cord where the blood is collected and stored for transplants. Medical experts say adult stem cells have treated more than 70 diseases. Experts say more than 20,000 Americans have had adult stem cell transplants. Several Austin-area transplant survivors testified during Wednesday's hearing including an 8-year-old boy who received a transplant.

"I was born with sickle cell anemia, but now I'm cured because my younger brother Isaac saved my life with his cord blood. I don't have to go to the hospital or take shots. I can do what any other 8-year-old can do, and I'm very happy about that," said Joseph Davis, II.

Davis' donation came from his younger brother's umbilical cord.

"Today, my son is standing here, standing here today, healed from sickle cell disease. I can't tell everybody to get on this behind me right now but I know from last year to looking at this year, it's happening. People are getting to know about adult stem cell, umbilical cord blood. This is why I love what I do, I don't want to see this blessing for myself, I want to see the blessing for everybody," said Darlene Davis, mother of adult stem cell recipient.

The state has already approved a \$1 million start up grant for the Texas Cord Blood Bank and passed three measures to promote the collection, storage and research of adult stem cells in umbilical cord blood.

The additional funding and support being asked of the subcommittee would go in part toward researching what other disease adult stem cells could cure.