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# A Diverse and Sustainable State-Run Public Cord Blood Program

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**Introduction:** The Arizona Public Cord Blood Program was created in 2011 by the Arizona Biomedical Research Centre, a subsection of the Arizona Department of Health Services, to advance the collection and increase the number of racially and ethnically diverse cord blood units available for transplantation, as well as to promote awareness of the benefits of cord blood stem cells through our educational partner, Save the Cord Foundation (STCF).

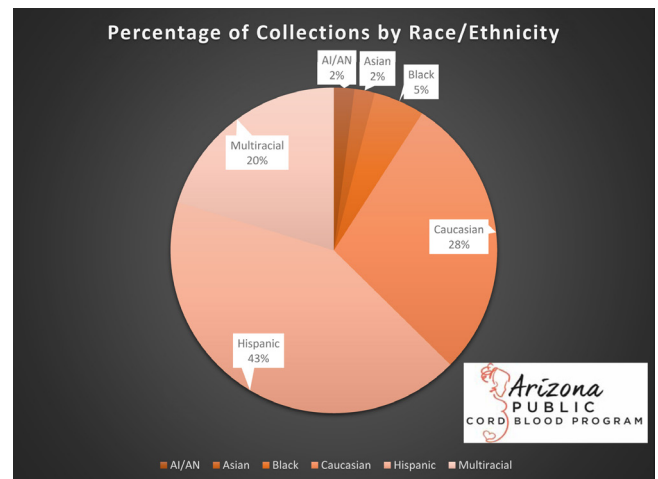
**Objective:** The main objective of this study was to create a sustainable program for women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to have the opportunity to donate cord blood, with the primary goal of transplantation and the secondary goal of providing non-transplantable cord blood units for research. A second objective was to educate the residents of the state of Arizona about cord blood stem cells and the need for their preservation.

**Methods:** A portion of state lottery funds support the program monetarily. Those funds are provided to four partner collection hospitals employing "cord blood consenters," whose responsibility it is to consent patients, assist delivery providers with collections, and package and ship cord blood units to our partner cord blood bank at MD Anderson Cancer Center. There are also two clinical coordinators who educate and train hospital staff on quality collection practices, with special emphasis on the importance of high-volume, sterile collections. STCF provides education across the state to expectant parents, health care providers, schools, and the public about the need for cord blood stem cell donation for transplant and research.

**Results:** Since 2011, the Arizona Public Cord Blood Program has banked several hundreds of racially and ethnically diverse

cord blood units with the National Marrow Donor Program (Figure 1) and has had 80 life-saving cord blood units matched with patients in need around the globe. This innovative program has expanded cord blood awareness and promoted the preservation of cord blood, and it also has resulted in the creation of an economic engine for the state of Arizona that is an attractant for STEM-based businesses and careers.

**Discussion:** A decade later, the Arizona Public Cord Blood Program has proven to be a sustainable model for collecting and providing suitable cord blood units for transplant to diverse patient populations.



**Figure 1.** Pie chart showing percentage of collections by race/ethnicity. Abbreviation: AI/AN, American Indian/Alaskan Native.