

(April 18, 2007) Lipinski Introduces Bill to Establish Amniotic and Placental Stem Cell Bank

Lipinski Introduces Bill to Establish Amniotic and Placental Stem Cell Bank Legislation Will Help Advance Research Into Lifesaving Medical Treatments

[Washington, D.C.] Today Congressman Dan Lipinski introduced the National Amniotic and Placental Stem Cell Bank Act to help advance the use of stem cells in treating serious medical conditions. Studies have recently demonstrated that the stem cells derived from amniotic fluid and placentas can transform into many of the specialized cell types found in the human body, thus providing great potential for lifesaving treatments.

The legislation would authorize and fund the establishment of a national bank to collect and store samples of stem cells that are routinely removed from the amniotic fluid and placenta that surround a baby in the womb. The bank would provide sufficient genetic diversity of cells so that all Americans could enjoy any treatments that are developed with the research.

"I am pleased that we are working to help advance the scientific possibilities these cells provide," Lipinski said. "Scientists in this field have noted that a national amniotic and placental stem cell bank is critical in facilitating expanded research. By providing this needed resource, they can focus their efforts in the hope of finding cures for diseases such as juvenile diabetes — a disease that I have lived with every day for more than 17 years."

New scientific research has demonstrated the significant medical potential of amniotic stem cells. These cells can grow into brain, muscle, and other tissues that can be used to treat a variety of serious diseases, and they can be easily collected without risk to the donor or embryo. However, research has been slowed by the lack of national coordination. Scientists must use their own time, money, and resources to collect and store amniotic stem cells. This diverts valuable resources from finding treatments and cures.

"By setting up a national bank, we can have a readily available source of stem cells that have the pluripotent properties of embryonic cells but don't raise ethical concerns," said Lipinski.

Lipinski's legislation would set up a National Amniotic and Placental Stem Cell Bank which will collect and store 100,000 amniotic stem cell samples to be made available for research and treatment purposes. These samples would provide the genetic diversity necessary to cover the needs of the U.S. population while simultaneously providing for the research needs of the scientific community.

"The establishment of an amniotic fluid and placenta stem cell bank would further research into these areas," said Dr. Anthony Atala. "It would add to our armamentarium of stem cell therapies that could benefit patients in the future."

Dr. Atala is the Director of the Wake Forest University Institute for Regenerative Medicine. He is also a Professor and the Chair of the Department of Urology at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. Dr. Atala's research published in Nature Biotechnology on January 7th underscored the significant medical potential of amniotic fluid and placenta stem cells.

