Canadian Blood Services

Stem Cell Registry & Cord Blood Bank

COVID-19 Update

Date: April 24, 2020
Time: 10:00hrs EST (GMT -4)

Distribution for WMDA Website
COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells

Date: April 24, 2020
Time: 10:00hrs EST (GMT -4)

For Posting to WMDA Share Website: https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF

Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry (ION - 5103)

Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry and Cord Blood Bank continue to maintain essential operations. Key aspects of the supply chain are being maintained by staff either on site as required for specific roles, or from home. The following updates are provided.

1. **ALL COURIERS ENTERING CANADA**

   **Effective April 20, 2020, Until Further Notice**
   - The government of Canada has updated requirements for persons boarding flights to Canada, mainly with regards to possessing a face mask prior to boarding, wearing a mask on the plane and specifications on what type/quality of masks are permitted; this includes any related issues with compliance.
     - The following document (PDF) is available on the WMDA website at: https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF
       - **Document 1 (applicable to all countries):** Interim Order to Prevent Certain Persons from Boarding Flights to Canada due to COVID-19, No. 6

   - Couriers are permitted entry into Canada for making medical deliveries of stem cells that are required for patient care.
     - The following documents (PDF) are available on the WMDA website at: https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF
       - **Document 2 (applicable to US only):** Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order (Prohibition of Entry into Canada from the United States)
       - **Document 3 (applicable to all countries, except US):** Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order (Prohibition of Entry into Canada from any Country other than the United States)

   **Effective April 15, 2020, to June 30, 2020 (repeated; originally posted April 17)**
   - The government of Canada has updated the requirements for mandatory self-isolation of individuals entering Canada; **however, couriers transporting essential medical supplies remain exempt.**
   - We have updated the CBS registry courier letters to reflect the exemption, these letters are completed during work-up upon receipt of the courier details and itinerary and provided to the transplant centre as per the usual process.
   - Please note, the previous exemption signed by Dr. Tam is no longer valid and a new letter is not being provided. You can print a copy of the additional information from the link below:
     - **Direct link (applicable to all countries):** Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order (Mandatory Isolation, with Exemptions), No. 2

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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- **End Update, April 24, 2020** -
COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells

Date: April 17, 2020
Time: 16:00hrs EST (GMT -4)

For Posting to WMDA Share Website: https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF

Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry (ION - 5103)

Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry and Cord Blood Bank continue to maintain essential operations. Key aspects of the supply chain are being maintained by staff either on site as required for specific roles, or from home. The following updates are provided.

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- End Update, April 17, 2020 -
COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells

Date: March 30, 2020
Time: 16:00hrs EST (GMT -4)

For Posting to WMDA Share Website: https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF

Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry (ION - 5103)

Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry and Cord Blood Bank continue to maintain essential operations. Key aspects of the supply chain are being maintained by staff either on site as required for specific roles, or from home. The following updates are provided:

1. SUSPENDING BONE MARROW COLLECTION

As of March 30, Canadian collection centres will no longer be collecting bone marrow (HPC-M) from unrelated donors until further notice. Access to operating rooms, use of anesthetic machines and personal protective equipment for marrow harvests are no longer sufficiently available to allow Canada to continue this activity for the time being.

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- End Update, March 30, 2020 -
COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells

Date: March 27, 2020
Time: 12:00hrs EST (GMT -4)

For Posting to WMDA Share Website: https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF

Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry (ION - 5103)

Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry and Cord Blood Bank continue to maintain essential operations. Key aspects of the supply chain are being maintained by staff either on site as required for specific roles, or from home. The following updates are provided:

1. CANADIAN BLOOD SERVICES REGISTRY UPDATES

   **Ceasing Bone Marrow Collection:** As of March 27, Canadian collection centres will no longer be collecting bone marrow (HPC-M) from unrelated donors until further notice. Access to operating rooms, use of anesthetic machines and personal protective equipment for marrow harvests are no longer sufficiently available to allow us to continue this activity for the time being.

   **Verification Typing (VT):** The following is to provide more detail around the change to the VT request process (item #2 from the March 20, update further below):

   - **Can I still request verification typing for unrelated donors from CBS Stem Cell Registry?**
     No, you will now initiate a ‘Reservation Request’. The registry will then contact the donor, complete the HSQ, review the donation process, confirm willingness to donate if requested for WU. If donor is deferred or not able/willing to proceed with donation, we will cancel the reservation request. If donor is willing to remain on hold and willing to donate, we will send you any donor information that may be a risk to the patient.

   - **Can I still request extended HLA (eHLA) for unrelated donors from CBS Stem Cell Registry**
     You can still request eHLA; however, testing will only proceed if the donor has a stored sample available for testing. We are not able to accommodate eHLA testing if the donor requires a new buccal swab as we are not able to prepare the buccal swab KITs to send to the donor at this time.

   - **How will previous VT requests be managed that will not have a blood sample drawn?** We will be communicating directly with each of the applicable transplant centres via email to request that you send a reservation request for these donors if you are still interested or you can forward any questions; if not, you can cancel the VT request (a list of the donors will be provided).

   **Health Screening:** Four additional coronavirus screening questions for the Registry were implemented on March 23, 2020, as an addendum to the current questionnaire, as follows:

   i. In the past 28 days, have you been diagnosed with 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) or suspected of having this infection?

   ii. In the past 28 days, have you been in close contact, such as living with or caring for anyone diagnosed with coronavirus?

   iii. In the past 28 days, have you traveled to or lived in a country assigned by the CDC with a Level 3 warning risk for coronavirus?
iv. In the upcoming 2 months, do you plan to travel to a country assigned by the CDC with a Level 3 warning risk for coronavirus?

If a donor is found to be at risk of COVID-19 infection, CBS will notify the transplant centre.

2. COURIER INFORMATION

Update for Couriers Entering Canada

- The government of Canada issued updated documents for couriers to use for entering Canada from a country other than the United States. As a friendly reminder, transplant centres provide the two (2) documents to the couriers, as needed. The documents are as follows and can be found on the WMDA website at: https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF
  - Attachment 1: Order in Council permitting foreign nationals entry into Canada for the purpose of making medical deliveries of stem cells required for patient care
  - Attachment 2: Letter of exemption for Medical Deliveries from the Canadian government

- For couriers arriving from the United States, transplant centres must provide one (1) document to the courier. This document is as follows and can be found on the WMDA website at https://share.wmda.info/x/Yj6OF
  - Attachment 2: Letter of exemption for Medical Deliveries from the Canadian government
  - Please note that any US courier must not have been outside Canada or the United States in the last 14 days from the date of entry into Canada.

- Canadian Customs:
  - Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) has received a copy of the exemption and therefore are aware of its existence
  - The custom agent has a direct telephone number to CBSA to validate the information if they have questions or concerns
  - Quarantine agents of CBSA that are present at each airport (those receiving international travelers) that work with custom agents, have also received the information on the exemption;
  - If problems arise, the courier can communicate with Canadian Blood Services, so that we can help manage any issues with the CBSA agent and resolve the situation.

- Airlines:
  - Transport Canada is aware of the exemption
  - Transport Canada will relay this information to the airlines
  - If couriers have any issues with the airline, they can communicate with Canadian Blood Services and we can try and mitigate the issue through CBSA.
  - Air carriers must conduct a health check of every person prior to boarding a flight to Canada. Anyone refusing to cooperate will not be permitted to board the plane.
  - No foreign national will be admitted into Canada if they exhibit the following symptoms:
    - a fever;
    - a cough; and
    - breathing difficulties.

CONTACT INFORMATION
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- End Update, March 27, 2020 -
COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells

Date: March 20, 2020
Time: 16:00hrs EST (GMT -4)

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Canadian Blood Services Stem Cell Registry and Cord Blood Bank continue to maintain essential operations. Key aspects of the supply chain are being maintained by staff either on site as required for specific roles, or from home. The following updates are provided:

1. COURIER INFORMATION

   Documents for Entering Canada
   - Transplant centres are responsible for providing the two (2) following documents to the couriers, for entry in Canada:
     o Government-of-Canada_Update-to-Section-58-of-the-Quarantine-Act
     o CANADA-Essential-Service-Exemption-Letter_Persons-Making-Urgent-Medical-Deliveries
   - Canadian Customs:
     o Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) has received a copy of the exemption and therefore are aware of its existence
     o The custom agent has a direct telephone number to CBSA to validate the information if they have questions or concerns
     o If problems arise, the courier can communicate with Canadian Blood Services, so that we can help manage any issues with the CBSA agent and resolve the situation.
   - Airlines:
     o Transport Canada is aware of the exemption
     o Transport Canada will relay this information to the airlines
     o If couriers have any issues with the airline, they can communicate with Canadian Blood Services and we can try and mitigate the issue through CBSA.

2. CANADIAN BLOOD SERVICES REGISTRY UPDATE

   Verification Typing: As of 2020-03-19, we will no longer be performing verification typing (VT), or “samples only” requests, until further notice to ensure the safety of donors and minimize the risk of community transmission of COVID-19; this is in addition to the current challenges in scheduling and shipping samples. You can submit a ‘Reservation Request’ and we will contact the donor to complete the Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ), review the donation process and confirm their commitment to proceeding with donation. Transplant centres will be able to request simultaneous VT/Work-up to complete the VT and IDM testing. For any VT requests currently in process, we will cancel any upcoming sample appointments; for any new requests we have received we will proceed as above by contacting donor, completing the HSQ and reviewing the donation information.

CONTACT INFORMATION
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- End Update, March 20, 2020 -
COVID-19 Update from Canadian Blood Services, Stem Cells

Date: March 17, 2020
Time: 11:00 EST (GMT -4)

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1. HEALTH SCREENING
   - Implemented new travel screening question on March 8, 2020:
     - Travel outside Canada, the continental U.S. or Europe in the last 21 days:
       - Registry, will be reported to the transplant centre
       - Cord Blood, results in deferral
   - Additional coronavirus screening for the Registry will be implemented as an addendum to the current questionnaire as soon as operationally possible.
   - For cord blood, there were no additional questions/adjustments, as the collection hospitals were already screening for COVID-19 risk, and anyone identified as a risk was deferred from donating cord blood.

2. CORD BLOOD BANK COLLECTIONS, AVAILABILITY & SELECTION SUPPORT SERVICE
   - As of March 16, at 23:00hrs EST, Canadian Blood Services' Cord Blood Bank is suspending collections until further notice to contribute to the collective efforts in limiting the spread of COVID-19.
   - Searching, matching and distribution of cord blood units is fully operational.
   - Cord blood units remain readily available, were collected before the COVID-19 outbreak and are not currently limited to travel restrictions.
   - Recommended, ordering cord blood units as far in advance as possible to ensure timely delivery.
   - Canadian transplant centres have been informed of the WMDA's cord blood selection support service.

3. COURIER SERVICES
   - Our team can assist with providing support and recommendations to help ensure the safe delivery of stem cell products to Canadian transplant centres.
   - Transplant centres may wish to consider having couriers hand-over the product at the airport and/or outside of the hospital.
   - Where needed, we are working with logistics of Hema-Quebec to assist with logistical challenges.

4. CRYOPRESERVATION OF UNRELATED ADULT DONOR PRODUCTS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
   - Cryopreserving products is recommended – Canadian Blood Services can assist Canadian transplant centres in managing this process.
   - All requests for cryopreservation of Canadian Blood Services donor products will be approved until further notice.
• Advised Canadian transplant centres that some international registries still require medical approval and/or consent from the donor.
• Usual process for submitting cryopreservation requests being followed.

5. DONOR PROXIMITY TO COLLECTION CENTRES & BACKUP PLANNING

• Advised Canadian transplant centres that if there are multiple suitable Canadian donors available, we may be able to assist, upon request, with donors who are in closer proximity to a collection centre to limit donor travel; however, this will be dependant on collection centre and donor availability.
• In terms of donor availability, we may see challenges, and encourage transplant centres to work closely with our case managers including identifying a backup donor/product whenever possible. This can include additional unrelated adult donors, cord blood unit(s), related donor or haploidentical donor.
• Transplant centres may want to consider delaying transplant for non-urgent cases.
• Prioritizing use of domestic adult unrelated donors and cord blood products given the evolving logistical challenges may become more prevalent.
• Taking into consideration the safety of the public, all Registry-related recruitment events are suspended, and are encouraging online registration.

6. TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

• To date, there are no known travel restrictions within Canada, and we continue to monitor this closely. All travel restrictions can be found here: https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories.
• As of March 18, international flights will be permitted to land only at the international airports in Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, issued a statement in which he announced that Canada is barring entry to all travelers who are not Canadian citizens, permanent residents or Americans.
• All returning travelers will have to undergo a 14-day isolation period prior to resuming normal activities. These measures will be in place until further notice, but the Prime Minister warns that they are subject to change as the situation progresses.
• Canadian Blood Services is working closely with Hema-Quebec and courier services to find solutions to minimize the impact on international stem cell transportation and will provide updates on the situation.

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- End Update, March 17, 2020 -