

Bone Marrow Transplant

Dear friends: This is an urgent appeal to all people of Indian origin, particularly the Telugus.

VINODKUMAR (37) is a software engineer from Reno NV where he lives with his wife Jyotsna and two young children. He is suffering from "MYELOFIBROSIS" since September 2009. Doctors tried all possible treatments and now his chance of survival depends on finding a matching bone marrow to perform a Bone Marrow Transplant. The siblings are the first ones tested to see if they match. Unfortunately his brother's bone marrow didn't match his. More details of Vinod's condition can be viewed at www.saveVinod.com

When a related donor is unavailable the search is made among volunteers who have registered with national and international registries as potential donors. Donors are selected based on HLA type matching which is a genetic signature match and a match usually occurs within the same ethnic groups. Hence it is more likely that a Telugu patient like Vinod is most likely to find a match among other Telugus.

In the US, drives to register volunteers are conducted under the supervision of the National Marrow Donor program, an agency funded by the US Federal Government. More details can be obtained at www.marrow.org. Since Indians are under-represented on the national registry, all testing is free for Indian donors. You can help in three ways:

1. If you are a healthy adult between 18 and 60 years of age and would like to be a donor to provide "pranabiksha" to a cancer patient needing BMT, please contact anyone listed on SaveVinod.com. Even if you do not match Vinod's needs you may match some other patient and you will have the satisfaction of literally saving a life. Once you are registered, you may be called upon to donate any time until you reach 60 years of age. Choice to donate is a personal decision and you can decline either temporarily or permanently at any time.

2. Since Vinod has not been able to find a match so far, he has been advised to extend the volunteer recruitment effort to his native district of Khammam in AP. The testing process is expensive and costs about \$50 per donor tested and registered. If you will be kind enough to support this effort which can help Vinod and any other patient, please send your contributions to TFAS with a note that this applies to the marrow donor drive. TFAS will send a check to a well established and credible organization in India. Your contribution to TFAS may be tax deductible. If your employer matches your donation, please include a matching grant form.

3. Umbilical cord blood is also a rich source of stem cells used in treating cancers. At the time of delivery this life-saving resource is discarded as medical waste after the cord is cut. Women who are pregnant can inform their obstetrician in advance that they would like to celebrate the birth of the baby with a noble deed by donating the cord blood. The hospitals will keep a collection kit ready and collect the blood and process it to be sent to Umbilical Cord Blood Banks where it is preserved in a cryogenic environment till a patient requires it.

If you have any questions and comments please call Rama Eleswarapu, past president of TFAS, at 732-390- 5776. He was cured of cancer because of a successful bone marrow transplant.

Rama Eleswarapu