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PRESS RELEASE

Unique offer by the Maternities MITERA and LETO Free Banking of Umbilical Cord Blood

The maternities of the **Hygeia Group**, **MITERA** and **LETO**, announced today that the umbilical cord blood of all babies born in the two maternities will be collected, processed and stored completely free. The parents will have a choice to either keep the cord blood for family use or donate it for public use. The processing and storage will be done by Stem-Health Hellas, the cord blood bank of the Hygeia Group.

It was also announced that the public cord blood units that will be released for transplantations in Greece will be completely free. There will be no charge to the patients or their insurance providers.

The management of the two maternities stated that this unique program, a radical departure from current market practices, will relieve parents of the babies born in the two maternities of a significant financial burden.

At the Press Conference, which was attended by Government representatives, physicians and academics, **Mr. Andreas Vgenopoulos, the Vice President of the Hygeia Group**, stated that “the initiative of the two maternities MITERA and LETO to offer free storage of stem cells from the umbilical cord blood, coupled with the significant effort of Stem-Health Hellas to contribute to the creation of an adequate inventory of transplant units for public use, is consistent with the continuous efforts of the Hygeia Group to provide superior services in a socially responsible way. The hospitals of the Hygeia Group, he added, will continue to aim at providing medical services of the highest quality, without ignoring the real needs and financial constraints of society”.

Mr. Alexis Komninos, the Managing Director of MITERA, stressed that “the offer is a unique contribution to Greek society, which is currently undergoing through financial difficulties. Furthermore, this is the first time, anywhere in the world, that maternities are offering the banking of stem cells from the umbilical cord completely

free. We are very proud that this offer is becoming a reality, in cooperation with one of the best hybrid cord blood banks in the world, Stem-Health Hellas”.

Dr. Leonidas Papadopoulos, the Managing Director of LETO, stated that “parents will now be able to choose between family or public banking of the cord blood free of any commercial pressures, relying solely on the current scientific evidence, which will be presented to them in a transparent and objective way so that parents can make their own informed decisions”.

“The parents that will choose to donate their babies’ cord blood for public use will contribute to the creation of a significant inventory of cord blood units for public use in Greece”, added Mr. Papadopoulos who noted that “our country needs more than 200,000 cord blood units in public banks”.

Mr. Nicholas Nicolaidis, the Managing Director of Stem-Health Hellas, announced that “our cord blood bank is the first family bank in Europe and the only bank in Greece to have obtained the FACT-NetCord accreditation. He stressed that “only 27 cord blood banks in the whole world have obtained this very prestigious accreditation”.

The Stem-Health Hellas state-of-the-art processing laboratory and storage bank are located within the Hygeia Hospital.