

County of Dufferin
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Media Release

Paramedics Saving Lives in a Different Way

Dufferin County Paramedics join The National EMS Stem Cell Challenge

ORANGEVILLE, ONTARIO – May 10, 2010 – **There are over 800 Canadians and tens of thousands of more patients worldwide who desperately need a stem cell or bone marrow transplant to survive life threatening conditions** including cancers such as leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma; diseases including aplastic anemia and immune dysfunctions; and, genetic disorders.

Less than 30% of these patients will find a compatible stem cell donor in a family member. So, 70% of patients must rely on the generosity of a total stranger for their gift of life.

That's why hundreds of Paramedics, Emergency Medical Dispatchers, and EMS workers across Canada including Dufferin County Ambulance Service have joined the first annual National EMS Stem Cell Challenge during EMS week from May 15 – 23, 2010.

The challenge is to add hundreds of thousands of healthy committed Canadians between the ages of 17 to 50 who are willing to donate their stem cells or marrow to anyone in the world needing this lifesaving therapy. Joining the OneMatch stem cell and marrow network is easy and pain free.

“Our paramedics and EMD’s save lives every day,” said Dufferin County Warden Allen Taylor. “The is one more way we can help people whose only hope of survival is to find a matching donor for a transplant...Paramedics and EMS workers saving lives in a different way”.

The National EMS Stem Cell Challenge is a Shari’s Mission initiative and was started by Ontario paramedic Rob Ichelson whose 34-year-old sister was diagnosed last summer with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). After intensive chemotherapy, Shari’s last chance was a stem cell or marrow transplant. After months of searching a match was finally found overseas and Shari received her gift of life in March. “Shari made my family promise her that we would increase the numbers of Canadians on the registry and that is what Shari’s Mission is all about” says Ichelson. “With the help of our partners in EMS we will give someone, somewhere the gift of life. We will pay it forward.”

For Immediate Release

“Chances of finding a matching donor within the family of the person needing a transplant are less than 30%, said Tom Reid, Director of Dufferin County Ambulance Service. “That’s why it’s so important to get as many people from as wide a range of ethnicities represented in the communities we serve daily on the database.”

Dufferin County Ambulance Service is pleased to invite our media partners and the public to attend one of the following community registration events. Learn about EMS in the community and get swabbed.

Someone registering today may save the life of a future patient who hasn’t even been born yet.

Who: Headwaters Healthcare Centre
What: National EMS Stem Cell Challenge community registration event
Where: Headwaters Healthcare Centre, 100 Rolling Hills Drive, Orangeville
When: May 19th and 20th – 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

About Shari’s Mission

Shari’s Mission (www.sharission.com) is a not for profit organization dedicated to finding matches for over 800 Canadians and tens of thousands of patients world wide who will not survive their diseases without a stem cell / marrow transplant. Shari’s Mission organizes innovative stem cell and marrow drives in Canada and the United States. The National EMS Stem Cell Challenge (www.sharission.com/ems) is just one of many Shari’s Mission initiatives.

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For more information on this initiative contact:

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