

St. Vincent joins umbilical cord blood bank

ERIE (AP) — Women who give birth at Saint Vincent Health Center in Erie can now donate their baby's umbilical cord blood to a Pittsburgh-area blood bank.

The hospital has joined the Institute for Transfusion Medicine's nonprofit cord blood bank.

Umbilical cord blood often contains stem cells which can be used to grow other cells to treat cancers, genetic diseases and blood disorders.

But until Saint Vincent joined the bank this month, the umbilical blood was discarded as medical waste unless the families opted to save it themselves.

Mothers have been notified of the program since May 1, but none have opted to donate their baby's cord blood yet.

