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## Media Fact Sheet

### The Need

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- For people with life-threatening blood cancers like leukemia and lymphoma or other diseases, a cure exists. Be The Match® connects patients with their donor match for a life-saving marrow or umbilical cord blood transplant.
- Every year, **more than 12,000 patients in the U.S.** are diagnosed with life-threatening diseases such as leukemia or lymphoma, and their best or only hope of a cure is a transplant from an *unrelated* adult donor or umbilical cord blood unit.
- Every **four minutes one person** is diagnosed with a blood cancer. *SOURCE: Seer.*
- Most patients (**about 70 percent**) in need of a transplant do not have a matching donor in their family. They depend on the Be The Match Registry® to find a match.
- In 2012, Be The Match facilitated **more than 5,800** marrow and cord blood transplants. Since it began operations in 1987, Be The Match has facilitated **more than 55,000** marrow and cord blood transplants for patients who do not have matching donors in their families.

### Connecting Patients with their Donor Match

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- The Be The Match Registry is the world's largest and most diverse registry, with **10.5 million** potential marrow donors and **nearly 185,000** cord blood units. Through partnerships with international registries, Be The Match provides additional access to approximately 10 million donors and 405,000 cord blood units.
- HLA typing (or tissue typing) is used to match patients and donors for marrow or cord blood transplants. Chances of finding a match vary by individual based on their tissue type. A person's tissue type may be common, uncommon or rare. Tissue types are inherited, so patients are most likely to match the tissue type of someone who shares their racial or ethnic heritage.
- A patient's likelihood of having a donor on the Be The Match Registry who is willing and able to help save a life is estimated to range from **66 percent to 93 percent**, depending on race or ethnicity.  
*\*A breakdown of likelihood by race and ethnicity is available upon request.*

### Donating Marrow, Peripheral Blood Stem Cells (PBSC) or Umbilical Cord Blood

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- A marrow or cord blood transplant replaces a patient's unhealthy blood-forming cells with healthy ones. The cells used in transplants come from three sources: marrow, peripheral blood stem cells (PBSC) and umbilical cord blood.
- Adults may be asked to donate one of two ways:
  - About **75 percent** of the time, a patient's doctor requests a PBSC donation, a non-surgical, outpatient procedure similar to donating platelets or plasma.
  - About **25 percent** of the time, a patient's doctor requests marrow, a surgical, outpatient procedure that takes place at a hospital. General or regional anesthesia is always used.
- On average, **1 in every 540** members of the Be The Match Registry in the U.S. will go on to donate marrow or PBSC to a patient.
- A third source of cells used in transplants is cord blood, which is collected from the umbilical cord and placenta immediately after a baby is born. It is stored at a public cord blood bank and the cord blood unit is listed on the Be The Match Registry. There is no cost for parents to donate cord blood.

### Joining the Be The Match Registry

- The public can join the Be The Match Registry in person or online at [BeTheMatch.org](http://BeTheMatch.org). To join, people need to meet age and health guidelines and be willing to donate to any patient in need. Registration involves completing a health history form and giving a swab of cheek cells.
- People between the **ages of 18 and 44** are most urgently needed since they are requested by transplant doctors **more than 90 percent** of the time, and research shows that these donors provide the greatest chance for transplant success. People between the ages of 45 and 60 who want to join the registry are welcome to do so online with a \$100 tax-deductible payment.
- On average, **52,000** new potential donors join the Be The Match Registry each month. **More than 626,000** new potential donors joined in 2012; of those, **more than 40 percent** were from diverse racial and ethnic communities.
- Other ways to save lives include making direct financial contributions, donating [cord blood](#), volunteering or spreading the word about the need for more 18- to 44-year-olds to join the registry. Those who have already joined the Be The Match Registry can also help by updating their contact information.

### Composition of the Be The Match Registry by Race and Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Total Number and % Potential Adult Donors	Total Number and % Cord Blood Units
African American or Black	Nearly 720,000 7%	More than 13,000 7%
American Indian/Alaska Native	Nearly 115,000 1%	300 0.2%
Asian	More than 720,000 7%	Nearly 18,000 10%
White	More than 7.1 million 67%	Nearly 111,000 60%
Multiple Race	Nearly 395,000 4%	Nearly 17,000 9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	More than 16,000 0.2%	174 0.1%
Hispanic or Latino	More than 1 million 10%	Nearly 34,000 18%

- Approximately **30 percent** of the total Be The Match Registry membership includes citizens of other countries. \* *The above chart includes U.S. and international registry members. U.S.-only numbers are available by request.*
- Matching the tissue types of patients to donors is a complex process, far more complex than matching blood types. While most racial and ethnic groups are actually over-represented on the Be The Match Registry when compared to the U.S. population, many patients still do not have a matching donor due to the sheer genetic diversity of each group. Be The Match continually strives to increase the size and diversity of the registry to improve all patients' chance for a cure.

Our media relations staff is available to provide additional information 24-hours a day and can be reached at 612-817-6442. Please note the official name of our registry is Be The Match Registry®.