

## Drive to boost awareness for cord blood banking

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Virgin Health Bank (VHB) is collaborating with the Doha Mums expatriate community in a series of activities designed to increase awareness of cord blood banking and its medical benefits.

These activities will enable expatriate families to access information and benefit from VHB's transplant quality banking services.

"Increasing the awareness of cord blood stem cell banking and empowering parents to make truly informed choices about storing their baby's cord blood are vital elements of our social marketing programme," VHB CEO Dr Rajan Jethwa said.

VHB's commercial director, Andrew Glen, explained that, "by working with Doha Mums we're able to discuss cord blood banking directly with interested members and also stimulate discussions within their community.

"We know that making information available to women early in their pregnancies is very beneficial as it ensures that they are able to make decisions about whether to have their baby's cord blood collected without any time pressure," he observed.

Glen stressed that VHB's activities with the Doha Mums community complements the educational initiatives it also undertake in Qatar's maternity hospitals and are part of a comprehensive educational programme.

Founded in 2008 by US expatriate Roxanne Piper Davis, Doha Mums is the largest network of expatriate mums in Qatar comprising over 800 mums from more than 70 countries - a figure that has doubled over the last year.

"The expectant mums within our community really enjoy their interactions with Virgin Health Bank," Davis said.

In addition to sponsoring the group's bi-monthly meetings for expectant mums, VHB participates in Doha Mums community events and advertises on the Doha Mums website.

VHB has been providing cord blood banking services for families in Qatar since September 2009 and works with all the maternity units in the public and private sectors.

Currently collected cord blood units are transported to the UK for processing and storage at VHB's UK facility. However 2011 will see Virgin Health Bank open its own state-of-the-art cord blood processing and storage facility at the Qatar Science & Technology Park in Doha.



Davis and Glen at a joint event