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Granholtm approves stem cell banks, but rejects tax credit

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LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Gov. Jennifer Granholm on Thursday signed into law several bills designed to help create a statewide network of umbilical cord blood stem cell banks.

The legislation also requires the state to develop and distribute informational material about the stem cell banks.

The banks would acquire and store donated cord cells. Some of the inventory would be allocated for peer-reviewed research.

The cells would be made available to transplant centers working on treatments for Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis and other ailments.

"This is a big step for our state, moving Michigan forward to become a world leader in biomedical research," state Rep. Glenn Steil Jr., a Republican from Cascade and one of the legislation's sponsors, said in a statement.

The measures signed Thursday are designed to encourage adult and umbilical cord stem cell research in Michigan. Granholm and some Democrats in the Legislature want to go further and loosen restrictions on embryonic stem cell research, which many scientists say has more potential for medical breakthroughs.

Granholm on Thursday vetoed a bill that would have provided a tax incentive to people who donate to the cord stem cell banks.

Granholm also vetoed other unrelated tax incentive bills, including one that would have given credits to taxpayers using wind turbine or windmill-generated energy. Another veto killed a bill to give incentives that supporters said were meant to preserve farmland in Michigan.

In her veto letter, Granholm said the state "continues to face enormous fiscal challenges" and should be on solid fiscal footing before offering such measures.

The stem cell bank bills that Granholm signed were Senate Bills 1353-1354 and House Bills 6291, 6293 and 6295. The vetoed stem cell bill was House Bill 6292. The wind energy bill was House Bill 4647. The agricultural district bill was House Bill 4257.

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