In her book, "My Sister's Keeper", Jodi Picoult envisions a couple that have a child near death with a very virulent form of leukemia. Neither they nor their son is a match for the girl, Kate. So they use PGD to choose an embryo that is a perfect match. The embryo is implanted and the resulting child's umbilical cord blood (with many blood stem cells). This puts her into remission for a number of years.

But as the children grow Kate needs more things (bone marrow transplant, stem cell transplant) and finally at age 14 her kidney's fail and she needs a kidney transplant. Anna has provided it all....

Do you think this is fiction?



BRITAIN: BABY BORN TO COUPLE WHO WANT STEM CELLS A British woman has given birth to a son after receiving fertility treatment in the United States outlawed in Britain that ensures the baby is genetically matched to an older brother suffering from a rare form of anemia. Doctors hope stem cells from the umbilical cord from the infant, Jamie, above with his brother, Charlie, will help cure the older boy. Michelle Whitaker of Derbyshire in the English Midlands had in-vitro fertilization and screening at the Reproductive Genetics Institute in Chicago after Britain's Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority vetoed the treatment because the older boy did not have an hereditary illness. The agency had approved the technique for another British couple to save their terminally ill son who, by contrast, had a hereditary disease. Warren Hoge (NYT)

In the book, Anna goes to see an attorney to sue for the right to make her own medical decisions. She wins.*

In the above article, the couple, living in Britain has to have the procedure approved by their assisted reproduction committee. The law there requires that all couples wanting to use assisted reproductive techniques (ART) have approval. Mainly, this is because in Britain the government pays all health care.

Luckily they had money and could come to the US.

*My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult. Published 2003.