

INTERIM RESOLUTION 2021-003

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3 REQUESTING THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO RECOGNIZE
4 SEPTEMBER 2021 AS "SICKLE CELL DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH" IN
5 ARKANSAS.
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7 WHEREAS, "sickle cell anemia" and "sickle cell disease" refer to a
8 group of inherited disorders that affect the red blood cells; and
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10 WHEREAS, sickle cell disease is a disease in which a person's body
11 produces abnormally shaped red blood cells that resemble a crescent or sickle
12 and that do not last as long as normal, round red blood cells, which causes
13 anemia; and
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15 WHEREAS, the sickle cells also get stuck in blood vessels and block
16 blood flow, resulting in vaso-occlusive crises, which can cause pain and
17 organ damage; and
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19 WHEREAS, sickle cell anemia is a genetic disorder in which individuals
20 with the disease are born with two (2) sickle cell genes, each inherited from
21 one (1) parent while sickle cell disease is a genetic disorder in which
22 individuals with the disease are born with one (1) sickle cell gene and
23 another abnormal gene; and
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25 WHEREAS, an individual who inherits one (1) sickle cell gene and one
26 (1) normal gene has "sickle cell trait", which occurs in one (1) out of every
27 twelve (12) African Americans and in one (1) out of every one hundred (100)
28 Latinos in the United States; and
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30 WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that
31 sickle cell disease affects approximately one hundred thousand (100,000)
32 Americans and occurs among about one (1) in every three hundred sixty-five
33 (365) Black or African-American births and one (1) out of every sixteen
34 thousand three hundred (16,300) Hispanic-American births, and it is estimated
35 that more than one thousand fifty (1,050) Arkansans have sickle cell disease;
36 and

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WHEREAS, the National Institutes of Health is working on innovative genetic therapies that could someday cure sickle cell disease; and

WHEREAS, the United States Food and Drug Administration has granted orphan drug designation to sickle cell therapies to provide incentives and encourage the development of therapies for rare diseases; and

WHEREAS, sickle cell disease is a chronic condition that can affect any organ, including the kidneys, lungs, and spleen, and research indicates that patients experience many severe complications, including stroke, infection, and pulmonary embolism, and have a shorter life expectancy than the general population; and

WHEREAS, vaso-occlusive crises are a common painful complication of sickle cell disease in adolescents and adults that may occur several times a year, typically last several days, and are the leading cause of hospitalizations of patients with sickle cell disease; and

WHEREAS, these recurrent episodes induce severe pain, decrease quality of life, can cause life-threatening complications, including stroke, are the primary cause of hospitalizations of patients with sickle cell disease, and are associated with increased mortality; and

WHEREAS, sickle cell disease can be a life-threatening condition leading to a twenty-five- to thirty-year reduction in life expectancy, and access to comprehensive care may be limited by social, economic, cultural, and geographic barriers to obtaining quality care and improving their quality of life; and

WHEREAS, these barriers include limitations in geographic access to comprehensive care, the varied use of effective treatments, the high reliance on emergency care and on public health programs, and the limited number of healthcare providers with knowledge and experience to manage and treat sickle cell disease; and

1 WHEREAS, while there is no widely available cure for sickle cell
2 disease, one-time gene therapies, including gene editing therapeutic
3 approaches, are being developed and may offer potential cures for some
4 patients; and

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6 WHEREAS, one-time, potentially curative therapies for sickle cell
7 disease may offer substantial savings over the patient's lifetime by helping
8 patients avoid the cost of future health services,

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10 NOW THEREFORE,

11 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE NINETY-THIRD
12 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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14 THAT the Arkansas Legislative Council recognize September 2021 as
15 "Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month" in Arkansas.

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18 Respectfully submitted,

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22 Representative Fredrick J. Love
23 District 29

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27 Representative Reginald Murdock
28 District 48

29 Prepared by: JMB/JMB
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