

February 28, 2025

Statewide Steering Committee on Sickle Cell Disease

Dear Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk,

The Statewide Steering Committee on Sickle Cell Disease is in strong support of House Bill 1306: “Public Health-Sickle Cell Disease-Specialized Clinics and Scholarship Program for Medical Residents”.

This bill attempts to address the profound gaps in access to care for patients living with sickle cell disease throughout the state of Maryland. County of residence should not determine clinical outcomes for patients living with this severe disease. Evidence shows that accessing care close to where one lives improves outcomes. In Maryland, comprehensive sickle cell clinics are only available in Baltimore City. A recently established hub and spoke model for care distribution for patients living with sickle cell disease in Prince George’s County has significantly enhanced access to care and improved clinical outcomes. In particular, this model has reduced emergency department visits by 63% and hospital admissions by 41% within Prince George’s County.

Improving access to care via a “hub and spoke” model is evidence-based and clearly shown to improve care outcomes in other disease states. We believe that the bill should clarify that a portion of funding will go to support already established specialized sickle cell disease hubs within Maryland. Without a strong hub, it would be challenging for this model to be effective to deliver coordinated care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennie Law". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "L".

Jennie Y. Law, M.D.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Dr. R. Lorraine Brown". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large initial "R" and "B".

Reverend Dr. R. Lorraine Brown

Co-Chairs Statewide Steering Committee