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Judicial Proceedings Committee



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The Senate of Maryland

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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To Chair Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman, and the members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present this legislation before you today.

Dr. Sophie Lanzkron is the Director of the Adult Sickle Cell Clinic at John Hopkins and Co-Chair of the Maryland Statewide Steering Committee on Services to Adults with Sickle Cell Disease. In December 2008, the committee issued its report advising the public and its officials of the situation in Maryland: Expanding Comprehensive Services for Adults with Sickle Cell Disease. After the report was issued, the Committee went dormant until it was reactivated in 2019. However, Dr. Lanzkron, would be quick to tell you there is no funding for the committee to support any needed sickle cell outreach programs or to expand the services to those suffering the devastating effects of Sickle Cell Disease. There is a need to inform the public through testing and counseling upon a positive diagnosis of Sickle Cell Disease and to inform the public through testing and counseling upon a Sickle Cell Trait positive test.

Although testing for SCD is done at birth in Maryland, many mothers do not remember the results of such tests. This is somewhat underscored by the lack of counseling that should be provided at the time that such test results are disclosed. Counseling is in fact an important component of treatment. Health care fairs are an excellent way of providing information about the available resources for treatment and counseling and the psychosocial issues and genetic considerations related to a positive test for Sickle Cell Disease or Trait.

Health Care Fairs are not the fix-all solution to the medical needs of the SCD Warriors. However, this is a step in the right direction in an effort to test and treat those afflicted, and to distribute information in areas underserved by service providers that are trained in the diagnosis and treatment of the chronic conditions suffered as a result of the disease. Testing and subsequent counseling will aid those in the future to make decisions about family planning and Testing at health fairs could be conducted at the outset in those areas that have a concentration of SCD cases, and later expanded as the results and concentration of patients are determined. Testing provides the information needed to make sound decisions, and local health fairs provide a perfect venue for this testing. **For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable vote for SB 883.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron L. Watson".

Senator Ron Watson