



Testimony for HB1192

Health and Government Operations

Maryland Health Care Commission - Studies of Issues Affecting Individuals with Sickle Cell Disease

Position: Favorable

My name is Mikkyo McDaniel, and I am a member of Black Girls Vote, Inc., a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to engaging, educating, and empowering black women to activate their voice by using their votes. In addition, I am currently a nursing student at Baltimore City Community College. I thank the Health and Government Operations for the opportunity to share why this issue is important to me. I also extend a special thank you to Delegate Patterson for sponsoring the bill and being a consistent advocate for Maryland's democracy.

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is an inherited disease that affects the red blood cells by changing the cell's shape into a crescent form. While the disease's impact on the body is the decreasing amount of red blood cells transporting oxygen throughout the body. That complication creates fatigue, weakness, episodes of pain, swelling of hands and feet, and other concerning issues throughout the rest of the body. According to the Center for Disease Control 2019, approximately SCD affects 100,000 Americans, 1 out of every 500 Black or African American births, and 1 out of 16 - 300 Hispanic-American births.

The opportunity to conduct studies concerning the issues affecting individuals with SCD is pivotal because it is not just a disease but a trait. The sickle cell trait (STC) is a trait that can be passed down to ones' children and can eventually lead to offspring inheriting SCD. For instance, a family member on my maternal side has STC, and a family friend has the actual SCD. It is a debilitating disease because of the flare-ups that completely consume ones' body. In addition, the effect of these decreasing amounts of red blood cells can cause damage to the organs such as the liver, kidneys, tissues, bones, or heart because they are not receiving an adequate amount of blood. This inadequacy can decline the effectiveness of these organs to provide proper functioning for the body to maintain stability. Therefore, the studies can identify ways to provide treatments for SCD besides stem cell transplants which are donated stems cells from a sibling donor. However, many individuals with SCD may not be allowed to undergo a stem cell transplant because of the lack of a donor. On the other hand, the studies can identify ways of decreasing the passing of the trait, dietary modifications including food and vitamins, and therapeutic measures for a person with SCD. These studies can help patients with SCD in ways we have not identified or discovered.



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