

February 6, 2026

Dear Committee Chair and Members:

This letter comes in strong support for HB 178. We request a **vote in favor** of this legislation. Maryland citizens who have sickle cell disease suffer with debilitating pain and other negative health consequences flowing from this health condition. Their suffering is compounded by the dearth of medical providers having specialized knowledge of the disease. Sickle cell warriors often navigate health facilities with providers who have little to no knowledge about sickle cell disease and how to care for those who suffer with it. This lack of knowledge results in their being subjected to the humiliating assumption that they are substance abusers seeking narcotics for reasons other than relief from excruciating pain. While some warriors have family to advocate for them during a time of crisis, many do not and thus need their medical providers to have a familiarity with the disease and its treatment.

This legislation will help to address these issues by increasing the number of providers and facilities who have the knowledge and training to address the medical needs of the sickle cell community. As a family member of a person who suffers with sickle cell, I have personally witnessed the challenges she faces to access appropriate care. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Cassandra R. Beverley White