FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House Concurrent Resolution No. 44

98TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE WALTON GRAY.

2575L.01I D. ADAM CRUMBLISS, Chief Clerk

WHEREAS, sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder that affects red blood cells. People with sickle cell disease have red blood cells that contain an abnormal type of hemoglobin; and

WHEREAS, normal red blood cells contain hemoglobin A. Hemoglobin S and hemoglobin C are abnormal types of hemoglobin; and

WHEREAS, red blood cells containing mostly hemoglobin S do not live as long as normal red blood cells and have difficulty passing through the body's small vessels. These hemoglobin S red blood cells can block small blood vessels, resulting in tissue damage due to less blood reaching that portion of the body; and

WHEREAS, sickle cell trait is an inherited condition in which both hemoglobin A and S are produced in the red blood cells, always more A than S. Sickle cell trait is not a type of sickle cell disease; and

WHEREAS, sickle cell conditions are inherited from parents in much the same way as blood type, hair color and texture, eye color and other physical traits. The types of hemoglobin a person makes in the red blood cells depend upon what hemoglobin genes the person inherits from his or her parents; and

WHEREAS, since sickle cell conditions are inherited from parents, it is important for people to be aware if they are a carrier before having children; and

WHEREAS, more than 90,000 people in the United States have sickle cell disease, affecting mostly persons of African heritage according to the National Institute of Health. Currently, there is no universal cure for sickle cell disease; and

WHEREAS, sickle cell disease results in a shortened life expectancy, with the average life expectancy being 42 years for men and 48 years for women; and

WHEREAS, based on the population of 6 million in the State of Missouri, 700,000 are African American. 1 out of 400 suffers with sickle cell conditions and 1 out of 12 has the sickle cell trait; and

WHEREAS, with these estimated numbers, there are approximately 1,750 individuals with sickle cell conditions and 58,000 individuals with sickle cell trait in the State of Missouri; and

WHEREAS, approximately 700 children, adolescents, and young adults with sickle cell disease reside in the St. Louis Metropolitan area. However, less than 25% of this sickle cell population will graduate from high school or seek higher education; and

WHEREAS, health maintenance for persons with sickle cell disease starts with early diagnosis, preferably when a newborn; and

WHEREAS, treatment of complications often includes antibiotics, pain management, intravenous fluids, blood transfusions, and surgery in combination with psychosocial support; and

WHEREAS, there are promising new treatments being developed which can prevent red blood cells from sickling without causing harm to other parts of the body, reduce the frequency of severe pain, acute chest syndrome, and the need for blood transfusions, and provide options to eliminate iron overload caused by repeated blood transfusions; and

WHEREAS, public awareness about sickle cell trait and disease and the numerous programs and screening available is vital to reduce to pervasiveness of sickle cell conditions:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the House of Representatives of the Ninety-eighth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate concurring therein, hereby designate the week of September 20 - 26, 2015, as "Sickle Cell Awareness Week" in Missouri; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly encourages and urges all citizens of this state to participate in activities during Sickle Cell Awareness Week to address the pervasiveness of sickle cell trait and disease and the need to increase public awareness of the available programs and screenings.

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