

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 35

Relating to sickle cell awareness week.

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 their red blood cells depends 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, sickle cell disease impacts 1 out of every 400 African Americans, and based on Missouri's population of 6.1 million, there are approximately 2,052 sickle cell disease patients in the state of Missouri; and

Whereas, based on population numbers, approximately 446 African American sickle cell disease patients reside in Jackson County, 661 in St. Louis County, and 370 in St. Louis City; and

Whereas, health maintenance for persons with sickle cell disease starts with early diagnosis, preferably as 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, sickle cell disease patients face notable health disparities that impact their care and quality of life. Patients with sickle cell disease have a higher rate of returning to the hospital within 30 days of discharge compared to other health conditions. Since the disease and its symptoms are often poorly understood, many sickle cell disease patients experience longer wait times to see a doctor and to receive needed pain medication in the emergency department; 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 and acute chest syndrome, reduce the need for blood transfusions, and provide options to eliminate iron overload

caused by repeated blood transfusions; and

Whereas, increased patient education is key to ensuring individuals understand sickle cell disease, its impacts, and possible treatments; and

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

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the members of the Missouri Senate, One Hundred First General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, hereby designate the third full week in September 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, as well as increase public awareness of the health disparities impacting sickle cell disease patients; and

Be It Further Resolved that this resolution be sent to the Governor for his approval or rejection pursuant to the Missouri Constitution.