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SENATE RESOLUTION 179

By Akbari

A RESOLUTION relative to sickle cell disease.

WHEREAS, sickle cell disease (SCD) is one of the most commonly inherited blood disorders, affecting approximately 100,000 children and adults in this country. In the United States, one in 365 African Americans and one in 16,300 Hispanics have SCD; and

WHEREAS, SCD is a complex genetic disease involving multicellular adhesion between red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets, and endothelial cells, resulting in vaso-occlusive crises (VOCs); and

WHEREAS, VOCs are the hallmark of SCD; these recurrent episodes induce severe pain; decrease quality of life; can cause life-threatening complications, including stroke; are the primary cause of hospitalizations in SCD; and are associated with increased mortality; and

WHEREAS, VOC is the number one reason that patients with SCD visit the emergency room or are hospitalized; VOCs are the leading cause of hospitalizations that last several days; and

WHEREAS, the estimated annual medical costs for SCD exceed $1.1 billion in the United States. Eighty percent of overall treatment costs are attributed to inpatient costs and $356 million in estimated annual costs for emergency room visits. The annual cost for patients with SCD range from more than $34,000 to more than $231,000; and

WHEREAS, high Medicaid costs stem from "super utilizers," patients with more than four hospital visits per year; SCD is the fifth-most common diagnosis among Medicaid "super utilizers"; and

WHEREAS, access to care may be challenging for patients with SCD; due to a lack of physicians experienced in treating SCD, many young adults transitioning from pediatric care

seek treatment in emergency settings. Hospital readmissions are significantly higher for SCD patients aged eighteen to thirty compared to patients aged ten to seventeen; and

WHEREAS, only four medications have been approved to treat complications of SCD, and more needs to be done to improve access to treatment and the quality of care for patients with SCD; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we designate September 2020 as "Sickle Cell Awareness Prevention Month" in Tennessee to bring awareness to the problems caused by sickle cell disease.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we recommend that the Tennessee Department of Health establish a program for the prevention, care, and treatment of patients with sickle cell disease and for educational programs to raise public awareness of the disease.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such program should: (1) establish SCD treatment centers and infusion centers throughout Tennessee with an emphasis on underserved areas that have a higher population of SCD patients; (2) increase access to care coordination and physical, mental, and pain management treatment for patients with SCD; (3) establish coordination of care educational programs to include counseling, education, and other services on SCD; and (4) implement a data surveillance program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on a biennial basis, the Tennessee Department of Health, in conjunction with stakeholders within the sickle cell disease community, should perform a study to determine the prevalence, impact, and the needs of individuals with sickle cell disease and sickle cell trait in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Health.