



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING BLOOD CANCER AND SICKLE CELL AWARENESS MONTH IN COOK COUNTY

WHEREAS, the month of September is National Blood Cancer Awareness Month as well as Sickle Cell Awareness Month, a month-long initiative designated by Congress to help focus attention on the need for research and treatment of blood cancer and sickle cell diseases; and

WHEREAS, Sickle cell disease (SCD) is the most common inherited blood disorder in the United States in which red blood cells may become sickle-shaped and harden. For a baby to be born with sickle cell disease, both parents must carry a sickle cell trait or genes. Sickle cell disease is not contagious, and there is no universal cure; and

WHEREAS, about 1 in 13 African Americans carry the sickle cell trait, and many do not know they have it, and an estimated 100,000 people in the U.S. have SCD, with approximately 2,000 babies born with SCD annually in the United States; and

WHEREAS, people of many ethnic backgrounds can have SCD, but it disproportionately affects Black and Brown Americans, with an estimated 1 in 365 Black Americans and 1 in 16,300 Hispanic Americans suffering from SCD; and

WHEREAS, Sickle Cell disease leads to complications including chronic severe and unpredictable pain, anemia, frequent infections, swelling in extremities, fatigue, delayed growth and is one of the underlying medical conditions that causes increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19, defined as hospitalization, admission to the ICU, intubation or mechanical ventilation, or death; and

WHEREAS, this national focus is essential and reinforces the National Institutes of Health (NIH) continued support of SCD research, education, and capacity building, including the “Cure Sickle Cell Initiative” to accelerate safe, effective, and scalable gene therapies to cure the disease; and

WHEREAS, because of the many advances and medical breakthroughs in genetic therapies and research, we are now closer to finding a cure for all SCD patients; and

WHEREAS, individuals can help be part of the solution by donating blood, which is one of the most critical treatments for sickle cell patients, but less than 10% of Americans donate blood. Additionally, sickle cell patients benefit most from blood transfusions from people of the same race or similar ethnicity, but only 5% of blood donors are of African ancestry; and

WHEREAS, education and research, educating others about sickle cell disease and sickle cell trait, and getting tested for sickle cell trait if you are of African descent and do not know your status are other ways to contribute to this important cause; and

WHEREAS, blood cancers include leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma and Hodgkin's disease, and every 3 minutes, someone in the U.S. is diagnosed with a blood cancer; more than 1.3 million Americans are living with or in remission from a blood cancer; and

WHEREAS, blood cancers are the 3rd leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S., but many people don't know the impact

of the blood cancers such as leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma, and despite progress, more than 1/3 of blood cancer patients still do not survive five years after diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, giving blood is also important for blood cancer patients, although blood transfusions do not treat the blood cancer itself, they do provide healthy blood cells if your body isn't producing its own, which can help relieve symptoms and side effects; and

WHEREAS, additionally for patients diagnosed with leukemia, lymphoma and other life-threatening diseases, a bone marrow or cord blood transplant may be their best or only hope for a cure. However, 70% of patients who need a transplant to do not have a fully matched donor in their family, which is why it's important to encourage people to sign up to be a potential donor; and

WHEREAS, the disparities faced by blood cancer patients are very similar to the disparities faced in general in the United States with minority groups disproportionately impacted across different blood cancer diseases, including having a higher incident rate. For example, Black Americans have at least double the incidence of myeloma compared to any other race or ethnicity; and

WHEREAS, among people under the age of 20, Hispanics have the highest rate of leukemias of all ethnicities and in children, by more than 20%; and

WHEREAS, this Honorable Body wishes to promote and raise awareness of Blood Cancer and Sickle Cell Diseases in Cook County and encourage everyone to be a part of this national effort to increase awareness about blood cancer and sickle cell diseases during the month of September and stand united to improve the health of those living with these diseases;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the more than 5.2 million residents of Cook County, do hereby take this opportunity to acknowledge Blood Cancer Awareness Month and Sickle Cell Awareness Month; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in conjunction with National Blood Cancer and Sickle Cell Awareness Month, that the month of September 2023 be hereby declared Blood Cancer and Sickle Cell Awareness Month in the County of Cook; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body.