



COVID-19 Weekly Bulletin #6

Monday, May 4th

We are extending our support by sharing resources through the Sick Cells' Weekly Bulletin to educate and empower the community during this unprecedented time. **#SCDSticksTogether**

SCDAA Health Updates

Follow [SCDAA's Health Alerts](#) to stay regularly informed about COVID-19 and what you need to know as SCD patients and caregivers. The SCDAA medical advisory committee is in constant communication with health authorities and will continue to provide updated recommendations for COVID-19 preparedness. For the provider advisory, click [here](#).

COVID-19 Updates

This section provides the latest information to provide an overview of the outbreak.

- CDC launched a national viral genomics consortium, [the SPHERES consortium](#), in order to map genomic sequence data of the virus that causes COVID-19. This effort will help them better understand how the virus is spreading, both nationally and in local communities.
- **Sickle Cell 101** was joined by Dr. Julie Kanter to share tips on how to help SCD patients [manage their pain at home](#) during the pandemic.
- Several states have begun initiating "reopening plans". Under the White House's "[Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#)", **individuals with serious underlying health conditions, including sickle cell disease, should continue to shelter in place** through Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the approach. Stay informed about your [state policy actions](#).
- **The CDC recommends wearing face coverings in public. Cloth face coverings** are especially important to wear in public in areas like grocery stores and pharmacies. For more information, visit the [CDC guidance](#).
- The [SECURE-SCD registry](#) is designed to capture pediatric and adult COVID-19 cases that are occurring across the world in patients living with sickle cell disease. Providers caring for these patients are asked to report all cases to this registry.
- Are you **caring for someone with COVID-19** at home or in a non-healthcare setting? Follow the CDC's "[Recommendations for Caregivers](#)".
- **Fully recovered COVID-19 patients may be eligible to help those currently sick.** Once a person recovers from COVID-19, his or her blood contains antibodies in its plasma that can fight the virus. For more information, check out [the National Covid-19 Convalescent Plasma Project](#) or the [Red Cross' website](#).

Policy Updates

This section highlights executive orders and legislation in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

- The second round of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) launched last week. If you are a small organization, you can [submit your application](#) today. The American Institute



of CPAs published [a five-step guide](#) instructing PPP borrowers how to calculate their loan forgiveness.

- If you are still waiting for your CARES Act stimulus check, you can [check your payment status here](#).
- To receive **unemployment benefits**, you need to file a claim with the unemployment program in the state where you worked. [Here's how to get started](#) applying for unemployment benefits in your state.
- [Here are some key things](#) you may need to know about how **student loans** are impacted by the CARES Act.

Sickle Cell Disease Emergency Funds

In this section, we highlight relief funds that may be available to support the community.

- **PhRMA is offering grant money to fund interventions aimed at addressing the alarming health inequalities** highlighted by COVID-19. Learn more about the [PhRMA grant and application process here](#).
- **NORD launched a Financial Assistance Program for rare disease community members impacted by COVID-19.** Through [the new program](#), NORD will provide financial assistance to eligible patients, covering up to \$1,000 annually. To apply, email COVID19assistance@rarediseases.org.
- **HealthWell has launched a new fund to provide copayment and premium assistance to support the sickle cell community.** Through the fund, HealthWell will provide up to \$10,000 in financial assistance for a 12-month grant period to eligible patients who have annual household incomes up to 500 percent of the federal poverty level. For more information visit HealthWell's [Sickle Cell Disease](#) Fund page.
- The Sickle Cell Disease Association of America (SCDAA) launched a COVID-19 Emergency Fund to assist sickle-cell non-profit organizations in helping their community members with health care, food insecurity, and other related concerns. Visit the [SCDAA website](#) to learn more.

Wellness Resources

A new normal requires new habits and some creative thinking about your psychological well-being. Here are some tools you can use to maintain an **emotionally safe environment**:

1. **Maintain a routine.** Establishing consistent daily and weekly routines is a way for people to feel there is some certainty during COVID-19 isolation. Make it easier by using a "habit tracker" like [Coach.me](#).
2. **Get the facts.** Get accurate health information from reputable sources to avoid unnecessary anxiety. For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 [situation summary page](#).
3. **Build coping tools.** The [Virtual Hope Box](#) app contains simple tools to help with coping, relaxation, distraction, and positive thinking. You can store a variety of rich multimedia content such as photos, videos, inspirational quotes or recorded messages that will help as personal support in times of need.



4. **Ask for help.** [Be The Match](#) is now offering **free counseling services** to sickle cell warriors and their loved ones. One of their licensed social workers can provide you with one-on-one support for personal and emotional issues.

How are you receiving the emotional support that you need? Tag us on socials so we can see what you are doing to improve your mental and physical health. #SCDSticksTogether #WeeklyBulletin