



April 8, 2025

Dr. Mehmet Oz
Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Dr. Oz,

On behalf of Sick Cells, I extend our congratulations on your recent confirmation as Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). As a national advocacy organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by sickle cell disease (SCD), we are eager to collaborate with you to advance health initiatives that benefit the SCD community.

We were especially encouraged by your remarks during your confirmation hearing, where you acknowledged the challenges facing patients living with SCD and shared your experience treating individuals suffering from its complications. Your support for innovative approaches—such as CRISPR technology and expanded access to cell and gene therapies—is deeply meaningful to our community.

SCD is the most common inherited blood disorder in the United States, affecting approximately 100,000 Americans. More than 50% of individuals living with SCD are enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)¹, making CMS a vital partner in ensuring access to care, treatment, and innovation. While promising advancements are on the horizon, barriers to access remain. As CMS Administrator, you are uniquely positioned to help ensure that these patients are not left behind.

Sick Cells is committed to advocating for policies that promote comprehensive care. We look forward to partnering with CMS to:

- **Expand Access to Breakthrough Therapies:** Ensuring affordability and availability of emerging treatments, including gene-based therapies.
- **Strengthen Provider Education:** Supporting initiatives that improve the quality of care for patients with SCD through informed clinical practices.
- **Improve Pathways to Coverage and Reimbursement:** Removing barriers that prevent timely access to life-saving and life-enhancing treatments.

¹ <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/sickle-cell-disease-infographic.pdf>

Sick Cells stands ready to be a resource to your administration and offers our expertise in shaping policy initiatives that impact individuals with SCD. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your team to discuss these priorities in greater detail.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to strengthening our nation's healthcare system. We look forward to partnering with you to accelerate meaningful progress for individuals and families affected by sickle cell disease.

Sincerely,

Ashley Valentine
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