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"Transforming Care for Sickle Cell Disease: A Comprehensive Policy Assessment"

Background Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is a genetic disorder that causes the red blood cells to become sickle-shaped, leading to various detrimental health issues including anemia, pain crisis, and a decreased lifespan. Compared to other racial and ethnic groupings, people of African, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and South Asian descent have a greater prevalence of SCD. The intersectionality between patients of color and the lack of equitable access to healthcare is due to the social determinants of health and institutional racism. Public health officials, policymakers, and community advocates have worked to improve laws and policies to assist individuals living with SCD, however, there are still flaws in this system due to inherent racial biases as well as lack of laws that promote comprehensive care.

Objectives This project aims to outline key policy recommendations to address the challenges faced by individuals and families in Louisiana living with SCD, ensuring equitable access to quality care and improved outcomes.

Methods Methods included researching laws and best practices in different states and countries. Data was also collected on the social determinants of health as they pertain to individuals with SCD.

Results Three policy recommendations were developed. These recommendations show the legislative and policy changes that could be made in the state of Louisiana to improve outcomes for individuals with SCD.

Recommendation 1: Establishing educational programs for patients and the general public/advertising

Recommendation 2: Promote healthy eating within the SCD Community

Recommendation 3: Updating Louisiana Sickle Cell Commission Policies

Conclusion To achieve health equity and reduce racial inequalities for patients with SCD, a comprehensive strategy that incorporates community involvement, healthcare professional training, increased access to care, addressing socioeconomic determinants of health, and supporting research and data gathering is required. Louisiana can strive toward a future where people with SCD have equal opportunity for health and well-being, regardless of their racial or ethnic origin, by enacting policies that give priority to these important areas.

