

September 14, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks -LaSure
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
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children do not receive the recommended care. ² TCD ultrasonography is a safe, non-invasive, low-cost screening technique that measures blood velocities within the cerebral vessels. It has been shown to accurately identify children at higher risk for stroke, allowing preventive treatment to be initiated.

Hydroxyurea and chronic blood transfusions are the only currently proven disease-modifying treatments for children with SCD. Both therapies are used in primary and secondary stroke prevention. Although neither has been shown to prevent all SCD-related strokes, these treatment modalities can significantly reduce the risk of stroke and improve the quality of life for individuals with SCD. Further, hydroxyurea has been shown to significantly reduce the incidence of pain episodes and acute chest syndrome. Treatment with hydroxyurea is underutilized for many people with SCD who could benefit from it. ³

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), the American Society of Hematology (ASH), and the American Stroke Association division of the American Heart Association (AHA) all recommend that all eligible children with SCD receive TCD screening annually from age 2 through 16 years. They also recommend that children who have abnormal TCD screening results who cannot receive regular blood transfusion therapy (due to availability, affordability, or family preference) should be offered hydroxyurea treatment at the maximum tolerated dose to substitute for regular blood transfusions. ²

who are Black

Additional Recommendations re: Evaluating Neurological Complications in Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)

As highlighted in the cover letter, our groups encourage the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to adopt the National Quality Forum (NQF) measure for Transcranial Doppler Ultrasonography Screening Among Children with Sickle Cell Anemia for

