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To: [FLHouseDems](#)
Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Rep. Skidmore & Leader Fentrice Driskell's Sickle Cell Bill Passes in the Florida Senate
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 4:55:04 PM

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Representative Kelly Skidmore and Leader Fentrice Driskell's Sickle Cell Bill Passes in the Florida Senate

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today the Florida Senate unanimously passed [HB 7085](#) sponsored by **Representative Kelly Skidmore (D-Boca Raton)** and co-prime sponsored by **Leader Fentrice Driskell (D-Tampa)**. This bill creates the Sickle Cell Disease Research and Treatment Grant Program within the Department of Health and expands the existing sickle cell registry to allow adults with sickle cell disease to opt into the registry.

The Office of Minority Health and Health Equity within the Department of Health will award grants to community-based sickle cell disease treatment and research centers to fund the operation of Centers of Excellence for the treatment of sickle cell disease. The centers will also develop a health care workforce that is prepared to address the unique needs of patients with sickle cell disease. Additionally, \$10 million in recurring funds for the grant program is included in the House and Senate budget.

According to a 2023 report by the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, Florida has an average of about 7,000 new cases a year, twice that of the national average. Moreover, the number of people with Sickle Cell Disease enrolled in Florida Medicaid averages 7,328 people per year.

“This is a disease that causes chronic pain and requires specialized treatment. By passing and funding this legislation, Florida is acknowledging the critical urgency to provide as many research and treatment options as possible,” stated **Representative Skidmore**. “This landmark legislation and investment in researching, understanding, and treating this disease is an important step toward bolstering the research that will, improve the quality of life for people living with this disease in the near future.”

“Today, we are one step closer to expanding care to the largest population of sickle cell patients nationwide. Enacting this legislation will launch Florida as a world leader in the fight against sickle cell and create what we understand to be the nation’s first sickle cell disease Centers of Excellence. The State of Florida is transforming the care available to patients, giving them hope for a better life with less pain. It has been a pleasure to work with Speaker Renner and Representative Skidmore to build off the work we started last year. Now, let’s get it across the finish line!” added **Leader Driskell**.

The bill will now head to the Governor’s desk for his signature.

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