

Press Release...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

For Immediate Release:
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JOINT CAUCUS OF BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS KICK-OFF SICKLE CELL AWARENESS MONTH & PUSH FOR BLACK DONORS

FYI – Due to a conflict with the Governor’s press conference, we are moving the Wednesday, Sept. 2 Sickle Cell press conference up to 10:30 am. and holding it on 2nd Floor of the Thompson Center in Room 2-025 next to Vitalant’s Blood Center (Instead of Blue Room).

What: Press Conference to Kick-Off September’s Sickle Cell Awareness Month

When: Wednesday, Sept. 2 at 10:30 a.m.

Where: 2nd Floor of Thompson Center – Room 2-025 (next to Vitalant donor center)

Who:

- State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago)
- 6th District Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller
- State Rep. Camille Lilly (D-Chicago)
- Officials from Vitalant (*formerly LifeSource*)
- Officials Versiti (*formerly Heartland*)
- Margaret Vaughn, IL Coalition of Community Blood Centers
- Executive Director of Sickle Cell Association of Illinois TaLana Hughes
- Government Affairs Director of the IL Coalition of Community Blood Centers Margaret Vaughn

Why: Sickle Cell Disease is a debilitating blood disorder with 1 out of 13 African Americans carrying the trait for the disease and 1 out of 100 Latinos. Treatments require ongoing transfusions but the more transfusions a patient has, the more difficult it can be to find a match, and the most compatible and reaction free match are that of a donor with a similar ethnic background. However, less than 5% of the nation’s blood supply comes from Black donors, leaving many sickle cell patients often waiting for the right match. The Joint Caucus of Black Elected Officials is committed to increasing the number of minority donors and is kicking off their SICKLE CELL MONTH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN urging their constituents across the state to donate blood and hosting a series of blood drives during the month of September.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

1. Go to www.americasblood.org, enter your zip code, and be connected to your closest blood donation center to schedule an appointment. The IL Coalition of Community Blood Centers (whose membership includes *Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center, Rock River Valley Blood Center, Versiti, and Vitalant*) has over 40 donor centers throughout the state.
1. Donate at one of the Sickle Cell Awareness Blood Drives:

- Thurs. Sept 11th - DuSable Museum 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 740 E. 56th Place in Chicago. Contact Vitalant (formerly LifeSource) [877-258-4825](tel:877-258-4825) to schedule a donation time.
- Sat. Sept 19th - Abundant Living Center 11 am to 3 pm (14540 Lincoln Ave in Dalton). Contact Lawrence Smith with Versiti (formerly Heartland Blood Center) [331-276-8851](tel:331-276-8851) to schedule a donation time.
- Sat. Sept 19th - Rehoboth Apostolic Worship Center 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (9130 S. Vincennes in Chicago). Contact Vitalant (formerly LifeSource) [877-258-4825](tel:877-258-4825) to schedule a donation time.
- Sat. Sept 19th - Second First Church-10:00 a.m. to 2:00 pm. (318 N. Church St. in Rockford) Sponsored by State Rep. Maurice West (D-Rockford). Contact Rep. West [815-987-7433](tel:815-987-7433) to schedule a donation time.
- Saturday, Sept 26th Rep. Gordon-Booth District Office 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (500 W Main Street in Peoria) Sponsored by Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth.

ABOUT Illinois Coalition of Community Blood Centers (ICCBC) Founded in 2002, ICCBC is a statewide organization made up of not-for-profit blood centers whose mission is to increase awareness of the importance of volunteer blood donation through public education and advocacy. Members include Central Illinois Community Blood Center, Community Blood Services of Illinois, Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center (which covers central and southern Illinois) and can all be reached at www.bloodcenter.org, Rock River Valley Blood Center, www.rrvbc.org (which covers northern Illinois); Vitalant-Illinois (which covers Chicagoland area) www.vitalant.org and Versiti Blood Center of Illinois (which covers Chicagoland and outlying regions). To learn more go to www.illinoisbloodcenters.com.

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