



Press Release

FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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For More Information:

State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

(773) 378-5902

Ford Stands with Sickle Cell Patients and a Coalition to Urge Gov. Quinn to Cut Waste, not Vital Services

CHICAGO, IL. – The ongoing debate surrounding our state's fiscal situation has caused many community groups to call attention to the priorities of health care. State Representative La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) maintains that we should cut waste and not the vital services that serve patients with sickle cell disease. Other patients living in our communities who need better access to quality care at community health centers on the West Side of Chicago must also continue to be served, and these services must be strengthened, not cut.

“We must protect those most vulnerable to sickle cell disease,” Ford said. “The Sickle Cell Center at the University of Illinois provides an invaluable resource to many in our community by treating patients, doing screenings, and keeping many Illinoisans healthy.”

Many patients with sickle cell disease have frequent and lengthy painful crises. Mistreatment and mismanagement of these episodes, as well as a lack of ongoing medical care can lead to many health complications, expensive hospitalizations, and in some cases even death.

“It is vital that the specialized work at the Sickle Cell Treatment Center at UIC continue. Sickle cell disease affects an estimated 70,000 to 100,000 Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control. The treatment center provides care for individuals who may otherwise seek services in hospital emergency rooms,” said Dr. Andre Hines, Circle Family HealthCare. “Seeing patients at the treatment center is much more cost effective because these patients have fewer hospitalizations. Closing the treatment center would eliminate many patients’ only means of comprehensive medical care and would not make sense economically.”

Lawmakers will soon return to Springfield to present a balanced budget to Governor Pat Quinn. In recent years, the Sickle Cell Center has had its funding cut by over \$600,000. The proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2011 does not include funding for the center or for programs like it across the state. The coalition concerned about this issue includes the UIC Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center; Health Resources Consultants; the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Illinois; Have a Heart for Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation; and the Lambda Children’s Memorial Hospital.

“I look forward to working with Governor Quinn to find creative solutions to continue providing care to those most in need,” Ford said.

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