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## **Historic State Funding for Sickle Cell Disease Brings First-Ever Comprehensive Care Clinic to Adults in the Inland Empire**

*Loma Linda University/SAC Health System joins Networking California for Sickle Cell Care*

**SAN BERNARDINO, CA** – Today, [Networking California for Sickle Cell Care](#) announced the opening of a new clinic to join the state’s historic network of comprehensive Sickle Cell Disease clinics. Located at the SAC Health System in San Bernardino, Loma Linda University/SAC Health System is the first Sickle Cell Disease clinic offering multi-disciplinary care to adults in the San Bernardino area. The Network is proud to serve local San Bernardino patients and improve the overall health of Californians with Sickle Cell Disease (SCD), a medically vulnerable population that has suffered decades of inattention and neglect, leading to poor care, and too many deaths of adults under the age of 40.

“There has been a long history of providers not fully understanding the complexity of this disease, which has resulted in patients being neglected and marginalized,” said Diane Nugent, MD, Founder, President, and Medical Director, Center for Inherited Blood Disorders. “Our specialized care team is committed to listening to our patients and providing them with a safe place to voice their care needs.”

In 2019, the California State Legislature approved funding to establish [Networking California for Sickle Cell Care](#). Since then, the Network has expanded access to specialty care; supported workforce expansion for coordinated health services; conducted surveillance to monitor disease incidence and prevalence; and strengthened education and awareness of SCD through competitive grants. Currently, there are at least 500 known patients living with SCD in the San Bernardino area out of an estimated 7,000 in California<sup>1</sup> – and experts say there are likely more. Before California began public health surveillance of SCD, no one knew how many people in the state lived with the disease. Because of [Tracking California's](#) work on the California Sickle Cell Data Collection Program, the Network has more recently been able to identify the counties with the largest numbers of patients living with SCD, including San Bernardino County.

“Our partnership with Loma Linda University/SAC Health System marks the first time San Bernardino adults with Sickle Cell Disease will have access to specialty trained providers right in their backyard,” said Mary Brown, President and CEO, Sickle Cell Disease Foundation. “The opening of this clinic strengthens the Network and existing statewide efforts to provide the care needed so adults living with Sickle Cell Disease can live longer, more fulfilling lives.”

In the absence of specialized clinics, preventable pain crises and other complications frequently lead to emergency department visits and hospitalizations at an estimated cost of \$2.4 billion per year nationally. A conservative estimate based on Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) data for 2014-16 indicates the charges for hospitalization and emergency department visits for adults with SCD exceeded \$226 million in California alone.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.trackingcalifornia.org/sickle-cell-disease/sickle-cell-disease-in-california>

Last year, the Network launched its “[Neglected No More](#)” campaign to raise awareness around SCD and elevate patient voices that have been silenced for far too long. Supporters and people with SCD can follow the campaign on social media through the hashtag, #NeglectedNoMore.

**Location and contact information for the new Sickle Cell Clinic at Loma Linda University/SAC Health System:**

250 S G St, San Bernardino 92410  
Family Medicine Dept. (first floor)  
909-382-7100

For more information about Sickle Cell Disease and new treatment clinics around the state visit <https://sicklecellcare-ca.com>.

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**About the Center for Inherited Blood Disorders**

*The Center for Inherited Blood Disorders (CIBD) has cared for hundreds of children and adults in Southern California, offering a safety net clinic that provides health care services specifically to patients with inherited blood disorders. CIBD has been able to increase access to care for those who are economically challenged by providing medical care regardless of ability to pay. CIBD is also a national leader in directing federal initiatives to promote regional blood disorder networks that provide team-based clinical care and uniformly track health outcomes. Learn more by visiting [www.cibd-ca.org](http://www.cibd-ca.org).*

**About the Sickle Cell Disease Foundation**

*The Sickle Cell Disease Foundation (SCDF) was incorporated in 1957 and is the first and oldest Sickle Cell Disease community-based organization of its kind in the nation. As the only organization in California approved to provide Hemoglobin-Trait Counseling Services and direct the Sickle Cell Educator/Counselor Certification Training Course, SCDF provides life-enhancing education, services and programs for individuals living with Sickle Cell Disease. SCDF broadens public awareness, delivers effective advocacy initiatives, and promotes innovative therapies to ultimately find a cure. Learn more by visiting [www.scdfc.org](http://www.scdfc.org).*

**About Networking California for Sickle Cell Care**

*Networking California for Sickle Cell Care (Network) is the state’s first and only network of specialized adult Sickle Cell Disease clinics. The Network was developed through advocacy and stakeholder engagement supported by data. Learn more by visiting [www.sicklecellcare-ca.com](http://www.sicklecellcare-ca.com).*