

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SCDAA Alerts Diabetes Patients of Potential Inaccurate Glucose Test in Sickle Cell Disease**

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Baltimore, MD -- During a forum on Capitol Hill yesterday with Congressional staff and Legislators, Dr. Willarda V. Edwards, President and COO of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, discussed the issues faced by persons affected by sickle cell disease as it relates to diabetes and the HbA1C test.

The study released this month during Diabetes awareness month was presented by Dr. Griffin Rodgers from the National Institute on Diabetes and Digestive Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). The study was launched, when in March 2007, Congresswoman Barbara Lee asked a simple question during an Appropriations hearing. She asked about the possible public health consequences of false diabetes diagnoses resulting from the common A1C test when administered to people with sickle cell trait.

Research by NIDDK revealed there was a problem with false positive/false negative tests when the “hemoglobin A1C” test is used to monitor the control of blood sugar levels in persons with sickle cell. The research showed that the A1C test was possibly ineffective for ethnic groups with variant strains of hemoglobin (as in sickle cell trait) such as people of Mediterranean, African or Southeast Asian heritage.

NIDDK said, “When the A1C is administered to individuals with variant hemoglobin they may possibly be over- or under-treated based on false blood glucose levels reported by the test, which could then also create further health complications. As a result of the exchange in the hearing, this month, NIDDK is releasing two new fact sheets to alert people to the problem, one for patients and one for physicians.”

Congressman Barbara Lee (D-CA) and CBC Health Braintrust Chair, Donna M. Christensen, a family physician, urged everyone to spread the information widely. Congresswoman Christensen indicated “the CBC Health Braintrust will work with the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, the National Medical Association, the American Diabetes Association and other important groups to make sure that this information is widely disseminated.” Congresswoman Christensen urged anyone with diabetes and a history of sickle cell or other hemoglobin abnormalities in their families to be tested as soon as possible.

**About Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, Inc.:** For 35 years, the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America (SCDAA) and its 100-plus Member Organizations and affiliates, located in more than 38 states, have demonstrated how community-based organizations can work as partners with local and state government agencies in furtherance of national health care objectives. In collaboration with member and other stakeholder organizations, SCDAA’s national efforts involve five broad categorical areas: research, public health education, professional health education, patient services and community services.

For more information regarding sickle cell disease and the work of SCDAA, please call 800-421-8453 or visit our website at [www.sicklecelldisease.org](http://www.sicklecelldisease.org)