MARAC Advisory Statement for SCD Patients Who are Teachers, Administrators, and Other Support Staff during School Reopening

SHOW THIS TO YOUR EMPLOYER TO HELP THEM HELP YOU.

July 31, 2020 – The Medical and Research Advisory Committee (MARAC) of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America finds that individuals with sickle cell disease are more vulnerable to severe COVID-19 than the general population. This position has also been supported by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Society of Hematology (ASH) COVID-19 guidelines.1,2 We recommend that all vulnerable teachers, administrators, and support staff should work from home if they are able to do so. Educators with sickle cell disease should be given priority for providing distance learning from home, if possible. Innovative approaches should be used such as lecturing from home or an isolated location away from students in the classroom supervised by paraprofessionals on site. Administrators should make special accommodations for vulnerable individuals at work if working from home is not possible. Recommendations about controlling exposure have been put forth by the CDC1 and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health with modification by Johns Hopkins University.3 An excellent framework for implementation has been provided in a monograph by the American Federation of Teachers.4 Measures to be considered include but are not limited to:

- Maintaining physical distancing.
- Implementing an effective system for testing, tracing, and isolating new cases.
- Using public health tools and age appropriate education to minimize risks of transmission to students, teachers and support staff stressing:
  - Physical distancing
  - Screening
  - Personal protective equipment and sanitation
  - Campus programing and organization to minimize unnecessary contact between people.
- Strong psychological and social support for all staff members.

What does this mean for individuals living with sickle cell disease?
We recommend that individuals with sickle cell disease follow the advice of their local healthcare providers and their local and state authorities. They need to follow the rapidly changing local COVID-19 infection status and have ongoing discussions with their education administrators about how to minimize their health risks while providing their students the best educational, psychological, and social experience possible.

For More Information, contact info@sicklecelldisease.org

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