FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress the Third Annual Report on the Administration of the National Sickle Cell Anemia Control Act (P.L. 92-294) in accordance with the requirements of Section 1106 of the Public Health Service Act.

Sickle cell anemia is the most common genetic blood disorder in the United States. It is found predominantly, but not exclusively, in the black population where it affects nearly 50,000 persons. The individual cost of sickle cell anemia is tremendous; in addition to medical care and loss of time from school or employment, the resulting psychosocial and educational problems makes advancement against this disorder of highest priority.

This year's report highlights the progress made in the implementation of the National Sickle Cell Disease Program and other related activities of the Public Health Service carried out by the National Institutes of Health, the Center for Disease Control, and the Health Services Administration. We have continued to move ahead in the areas of research, education and public awareness, screening and counseling, and rehabilitation.

Fifteen comprehensive Sickle Cell Centers have been established, bringing together all aspects of research -- basic, clinical, clinical application, and clinical trials. Continuing education and community demonstration programs have been included as integral parts of this important effort. This combination will permit the Centers to develop new and innovative approaches to education, testing, counseling and rehabilitation.

Also, last year 25 Sickle Cell Screening and Education Clinics provided information to more than one million persons, screened approximately 233,000 individuals, counselled more than 16,000 and referred many for appropriate medical care.

This activity is extremely important because the sickle cell trait is found in approximately two and one-half million black people. Although the sickle cell trait is primarily a healthy state wherein one carries genes for both sickle hemoglobin and normal hemoglobin, the blood disorder occurs as a result of the presence of genes for sickle hemoglobin inherited from both parents.

The National Institutes of Health is conducting intense investigations into the mechanisms of sickling in sickle cell anemia and subsequent complications, as well as carrying out therapy trials to alter the sickling process.

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We must continue to push ahead for new knowledge and methodologies for the diagnosis, control and treatment of sickle cell anemia, as well as carrying on and improving existing screening and counseling, information, and education and training activities.

The progress made in the last year is heartening and sickle cell anemia program activities will continue to be of the highest priority. I am pleased to present this report to the Congress.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,
May 5, 1976

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