

# Strategies

## Faith-Based Institutions



### STRATEGIES FOR FAITH BASED INSTITUTIONS

The term Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) describes a number of inherited red blood cell disorders. Healthy red blood cells are round, and they move through small blood vessels to carry oxygen to all parts of the body. Red blood cells affected by SCD become hard and sticky and look like a C-shaped farm tool called a “sickle.” Also, when they travel through small blood vessels, they get stuck and block blood flow. This can cause pain and other serious problems. SCD affects millions of people throughout the world, including an estimated 70,000 to 100,000 Americans. SCD is a major public health concern. We invite you to assess your needs and resources and to plan to initiate activities to raise awareness during Sickle Cell Month-September.

*Below are a few ideas on how you can participate in Sickle Cell Awareness Month:*

Enclose information inserts in the weekly bulletin about Sickle Cell and Sickle Cell Awareness Month

Conduct a prayer breakfast with the religious leaders in the community and local experts to discuss the goals of Sickle Cell Awareness Month and the role of religious organizations

Give a sermon on the current state of Sickle Cell, including disparities, and how members of the congregation can be involved in Sickle Cell awareness promotion

Host a seminar for church and community members on how they can take an active role in promoting Sickle Cell awareness in their own families

Conduct a youth group with young females on engaging in healthy lifestyle behaviors to reduce their risk in the future

Create a women’s group dedicated to improving nutrition, increasing exercise, receiving annual screenings, and providing emotional and spiritual support

Train (adult) lay health educators and (youth) peer counselors to be available to members of the congregation and to be a sustainable resource about Sickle Cell issues

Seek congregation members who can provide church with information as it relates to Sickle Cell

Register all Sickle Cell Awareness Month community events on the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America Website at <http://www.sicklecelldisease.org/>



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