

Sickle Cell Treatment Center Offers New Hope to Patients

Nikeyia Ingram, 38, who was diagnosed with sickle cell disease (SCD) at just 6 months old, experiences pain nearly every day due to the red blood cell disorder. Most days, she's able to treat the pain and manage her disease by controlling her stress, staying hydrated, and keeping in touch with her medical team. Lately, Nikeyia has been finding that grief has been affecting her ability to manage her disease. Last year, she lost her 15-year-old, Demetrius Ingram, her only son, in a car accident. The heartache exacerbates her pain.

SCD symptoms can be unpredictable. On a day when she's experiencing acute pain, Nikeyia might have to go to the hospital for treatment, which involves contacting her hematologist to ensure there is space in the Emergency Department to receive care. One study, published in the journal *Pediatric Blood & Cancer*, found that patients with SCD visit the ER an average of three times per year from the time they are teenagers through middle age. For people with SCD, this can mean long wait times in the ER, missed time off from work, and time away from their families.

For years, Barnes-Jewish Hospital and WashU Medicine physicians have helped adult and pediatric patients manage SCD and enjoy the best quality of life possible. In April 2024, the hospital and its physician partners opened the Sickle Cell Treatment Center, an outpatient center for adults with SCD that is the first of its kind in the St. Louis metro region.

The Sickle Cell Treatment Center offers patients like Nikeyia hope when it comes to comprehensive care for managing SCD. The 1,700-square-foot space, located in the Center for Advanced Medicine on the Washington University Medical Campus, supports people with SCD as a referral-based outpatient facility where patients can receive intravenous fluids to manage symptoms.

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The Sickle Cell Treatment Center, located on the third floor of the Center for Advanced Medicine, opened in April 2024. From left: Aimee Jackstadt, director, Hematology and Oncology Services; Roma Bordewick, executive director, Patient Care Services Operations; Sana Saif Ur Rehman, MD, associate professor, Medicine, Division of Hematology, WashU Medicine; Greg Patterson, president, Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital and Progress West Hospital; Jacque Randolph, executive director, Ambulatory Services; Angelleen Peters-Lewis, chief operating officer, Barnes-Jewish Hospital, president, Barnes-Jewish West County Hospital; Winston Wright, senior consultant, DEIB at BJC HealthCare; Rosemary Britts, director, Sickle Cell Association; Nergis Cavitt, lead consultant, BILD; and Steven Player, vice president, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.