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DOH-BREVARD RAISES AWARENESS REGARDING SICKLE CELL DISEASE

*DOH Highlights Importance of Addressing Sickle Cell Disease and
Trait Among Youth and Athletes*



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Merritt Island, Fla.— The Florida Department of Health in Brevard County is raising awareness about Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) and the importance of learning if your family has a history of the Sickle Cell Trait (SCT). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that approximately 100,000 people are living with SCD in the United States.

“Due to the serious nature of sickle cell, it is important that athletes with Sickle Cell Disease or Sickle Cell Trait work with their medical providers to ensure they take appropriate steps to prevent exercise-related illness,” said Miranda Hawker, Interim Administrator for the Florida Department in Brevard County.

CDC describes SCD as a group of inherited red blood cell disorders which, can cause pain and other serious conditions such as infection, acute chest syndrome and stroke. Individuals with SCT do not typically have symptoms of SCD, but they may pass the trait on to their children. Around 1 out of every 365 Black or African-American births and 1 out of every 16,300 Hispanic-American births are found to have SCD.

While most people with SCT may participate in sports without incident, there have been isolated cases in which serious health problems and even deaths have been linked to dehydration or overheating. Individuals with SCD are encouraged to discuss proper care and treatment steps with their physician.

“It is important that athletes take sickle cell trait very seriously,” said Frank Reddick, Chief Operating Officer for the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Florida, Inc. “Even though athletes diagnosed with sickle cell trait can participate in all sports, their activities and participation must be monitored regularly. It is imperative that all athletes with sickle cell trait maintain body fluids and avoid heat exhaustion.”

“Student athletes in Florida need to know if they have the Sickle Cell Trait,” said Dr. Roger Dearing, Executive Director of the Florida High School Athletic Association. “Athletes with Sickle Cell Trait can monitor their physical activity and coaches and students need to heed any warning signs of becoming dehydrated or overheated.”

For more information about SCT and avoiding an exercise-related illness, read more [here](#).

Additional information about SCD and SCT is available from the [CDC](#).

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