



April 2024

To: House Health and Human Services Committee  
Re: SB24-042—Sickle Cell Disease Support

Dear Committee Members,

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is one of the oldest women's organizations in the country, empowering women since 1881. The mission of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.

AAUW has led the fight for equity for women, and we have made progress over the years. Yet women continue to face barriers to reach their full potential. A critical area where attention is needed is women's healthcare, particularly for women of color.

We are pleased to give strong support to Senate Bill 42. While it will help both women and men, research has found that women with Sickle Cell Disease often face unique issues. Along with the major [complications](#) of SCD, women may also have [delayed puberty](#) and more pain crises during their period. SCD can also cause problems getting pregnant, pain during sex, and complications during pregnancy.

Women often bear the burden of caring for family members who are ill. This may require their absence from work, sometimes at the expense of their own jobs. Senate Bill 42 will help fill the gap in support and outreach that is sorely needed.

AAUW of Colorado requests your YES vote on Senate Bill 42 in committee and throughout the process of becoming law.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Su Ryden".

**Su Ryden**  
**AAUW Colorado Public Policy Co-Director**

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*American Association of University Women--AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.*



April 23, 2024

Dear Chair Daugherty and members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

On behalf of Children's Hospital Colorado, the patients and families, and communities we serve, I am writing to respectfully ask for your **vote in support of SB24-042 Sickle Cell Community Outreach & Services** that will create the Arie P. Taylor sickle cell disease outreach program. We believe this program will positively impacts the health, well-being, and quality of life for children and families across Colorado who are living with sickle cell disease.

Children's Hospital Colorado is proud to partner with the community to advocate for the health and well-being of kids and families. Our work goes beyond our hospital walls and into the communities we support. In addition to our patient care, Children's Hospital Colorado supports families by providing care coordination, advocacy and facilitating access to community programs and resources.

As a pain psychologist at Children's Hospital Colorado, I work with youth with sickle cell disease and am acutely aware of the lack of resources for these patients in the community to be able to effectively manage their condition and daily lives. The lack of resources can often lead to more costly emergency department visits, and poor health outcomes for the children we serve. As a state, Colorado can be especially challenging for youth with sickle cell, due to the cold and altitude. They need so many services to treat acute pain, and to prevent and treat chronic pain.

The first patient that I worked with who had sickle cell disease was a teenage girl. Her experience is what I would like to share with you. When I met her as a consulting psychologist, she was admitted for sickle cell crisis, which is a painful episode that occurs in people who have sickle cell. Amid experiencing the severe acute pain that comes with crisis, she had her phone out taking photos of her IV and was posting them on social media. She explained that social media was the main outlet where she could connect with others who have sickle cell, feel a sense of community and less isolated.

Later that year I learned that her sibling died from complications of sickle cell disease. I believe that additional funding and community resources for patients like this young girl and her sibling would have made all the difference in helping them to live long, healthy lives. Children and families deserve to have access to good care coordination, resources and community programs that I believe this outreach program will provide.

Thank you for your continued support of the health and wellbeing of Colorado kids. In this effort I encourage you to vote in favor of SB24-042 to support Colorado children and families who have sickle cell disease in ensuring they have access to outreach and support services in the community.

Sincerely,

Wendy Gaultney, PhD  
Pediatric Pain Psychologist  
Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology  
Children's Hospital Colorado



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