

BELFAST LORD MAYOR OPENS WORLD SICKLE CELL DAY 2017

JUNE 17TH 2017

The African and Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland (ACSONI) in partnership with Tunmicro Sickle Cell Foundation (TSCF) is hosting a public event at 2PM at Stranmillis University College, Stranmillis Rd, BT9 5DY in recognition of World Sickle Cell Day 2017.

Sickle cell disease and Thalassaemia affect millions of people throughout the world and is particularly common among those whose with ancestry from sub-Saharan Africa; South America, the Caribbean and Central America, Saudi Arabia, India and also Mediterranean countries such as Turkey, Greece and Italy.

In 2008 the United Nations General Assembly designated 19th of June every year as World Sickle Cell Day to raise the awareness about Sickle cell /Thalassaemia disease, to support victims and those advancing treatment or seeking to find a cure. On the 19th of June 2009, World Sickle Cell Day was first observed.

The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Nuala McAllister said, *"I am pleased to see organisations like ACSONI and Tunmicro Sickle Cell Foundation taking the lead to put the spotlight on Sickle cell and Thalassaemia in this region. Public knowledge around these health concerns is important especially where it alerts parents about sudden deaths in infants or alleviates pain and suffering. It is imperative that information is distributed widely to enable those at risk to make informed decision around managing their illness"*.

Olatunji Sule of TunMicro Sickle Cell Foundation said, *"Sickle Cell Day and its events raise awareness and knowledge all over the world of this terrible disease and its impact on the sufferers and their families. Once seen as only a minority disease, intermarriage and our 'shrinking world' have shown this disease affects all communities so Tunmicro SCF is proud to contribute to these important activities."*

Joseph Ricketts of Africa and Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland said, *"Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia are debilitating diseases which many people in this region may not be aware of their devastating impact on lives and communities. ACSONI works with other organisations to provide opportunities where people within the African and Caribbean diaspora communities are able to access support and education around these issues. We would also like to encourage further conversations and joint inter-agency work as well as inclusivity towards achieving best practice in health equality locally."*

END

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