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**Sickle Cell Committee Has First Meeting**

Preliminary recommendations from the first meeting of the HEW Sickle Cell Anemia Advisory Committee for expanded research and community service programs against this chronic disease of black children and young adults have now been announced.

In summarizing the results of the meeting, Mrs. Ruth Aikens, Committee Chairman, said that at this time the Committee favors an approximately equal division of available funds between research and community service activities.

Mrs. Aikens also characterized the \$6 million to be allocated for SCA research during the fiscal year as only a beginning toward a maximum-effort program to control sickle cell anemia and, ultimately, to eradicate the disease as a major cause of disability and death.

The Committee will meet again within approximately 60 days, Mrs. Aikens added, to develop detailed recommendations concerning program goals and the emphasis to be placed on each.

The SCA Advisory Committee met August 13 at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, with Dr. Merlin K. DuVal, Jr., HEW Assistant Secretary for Health and Scientific Affairs; Dr. Robert Q. Marston, NIH Director, Dr. Robert L. Ringler, Deputy Director of the National Heart and Lung Institute and SCA program coordinator for DHEW; Dr. Vernon Wilson, Administrator from the Health Services and Mental Health Administration; and other federal health agency officials. The purpose of the meeting was to consider plans for carrying out the expanded SCA program recommended by President Nixon in his February 18 Health Message to the Congress.

"This Committee is unique," Dr. DuVal said, "in that it marks the first time that a national level advisory committee, reporting directly to the Secretary of HEW, has been established to focus government attention on a specific disease problem and to recommend how the government can and should use its resources to attack a disease that afflicts an estimated 50,000 American blacks."

The President identified sickle cell anemia, an inherited blood disorder found almost exclusively among blacks as a high-priority disease target and called for a \$5 million increase in federal expenditures for research on this disorder during the current fiscal year. The National Heart and Lung Institute was assigned responsibility for co-ordinating this joint effort. The NHLI appropriation will contain the FY 1972 funds earmarked for this special program, but these funds may also be drawn upon by other Institutes of NIH, HSMHA, and possibly other participating federal agencies.

The Sickle Cell Anemia Advisory Committee was established by Secretary Elliot L. Richardson to provide advice and assistance in planning and carrying out this program from distinguished professional and lay leaders especially knowledgeable about the problems of sickle cell disease.

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