Nemours Children's Health Leaders Receive $5.32 Million NIH Grant to Boost Sickle Cell Disease Research

WILMINGTON, Delaware (November 2, 2026) — Nemours Children's Health researchers David Brousseau, MD, MS, and Robin E. Miller, MD, have received a five-year, $5.32 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that reinforces Nemours Children's as a premier site for research on sickle cell disease (SCD).

The award follows two previous grants for Nemours focused on SCD. A phase 1, $10.2 million grant was received in 2014 and a phase 2, $10.5 million COBRE grant was received in 2021. This prior support launched the development of the Delaware Comprehensive Sickle Cell Research Center. The new grant will initiate phase 3 of the work, sustaining support for Nemours researchers and continuing to support innovative projects, including the funding of up to eight one-year pilot projects, and boosting the use of bioinformatics in SCD research.

> *"Children with sickle cell disease and their families have multiple unmet needs, from insufficient access to medical care to bias from the healthcare system," said Dr. David Brousseau, Pediatrician-in-Chief and Director of Research, Nemours Children's Health, Delaware Valley. "Research has allowed us to develop disease-modifying therapies for sickle cell. It is equally imperative that we address barriers to receiving care through our research, and this significant grant will allow us to do that."*

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The initial COBRE funding fueled several innovative projects led by Nemours researchers, including:

- Aimee Hildenbrand, PhD, Pediatric Psychologist, studied increasing adolescent and young adult use of various sickle cell therapies. Dr. Hildenbrand has since received a prestigious R01 grant from the NIH to test the interventions she developed across multiple sites.
- Jin Jing, MD, Pediatric Ophthalmologist, studied a new method of assessing the impact of SCD-related blood vessel damage in the eye and brain. She is developing a novel paradigm for assessing vessel damage that will allow for earlier, targeted screening.
- Corinna Schultz, MD, Pediatric Hematologist/Oncologist, led a project aimed at improving communication with families and primary care physicians about the results of newborn screening results that indicate a child has sickle cell trait.

"This funding is critical to further developing our research capacity and our outstanding team of sickle cell researchers," said Dr. Miller, Pediatric Hematologist and Director of the Sickle Cell Disease Program at Nemours Children's. "Patients are already benefiting from phases 1 and 2 of this grant, and we look forward to the next phase of discoveries."

SCD is an inherited blood disorder that affects about 100,000 people in the United States; more than 90% are non-Hispanic Black or African American, and an estimated 3%–9% are Hispanic or Latino. The estimated life expectancy of people with sickle cell disease in the United States is more than 20 years shorter than the average.

Matthew M. Davis, MD, MAPP, Executive Vice President, Enterprise Physician-in-Chief, and Chief Scientific Officer, Nemours Children's Health, said the NIH grant signifies scientific excellence that carries the potential to drive practice-changing discoveries.

"Sickle cell disease is a major threat to child health, and Nemours has led the way in driving progress for children and young adults with the disease," Dr. Davis said. "This next phase of the COBRE grant will undoubtedly support additional advances that will benefit children throughout the Delaware Valley and beyond."

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About Nemours Children's Health

Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, which includes two free-standing children's hospitals and a network of 80 primary and specialty care practices. In 2025, Nemours Children's served more than

565,000 unique patients. Nemours Children's seeks to transform the health of children by adopting a holistic health model that utilizes innovative, safe, and high-quality care, while also addressing children's needs well beyond medicine. In producing the highly acclaimed, award-winning pediatric medicine podcast Well Beyond Medicine, Nemours underscores that commitment by featuring the people, programs and partnerships addressing Whole Child Health. Nemours Children's also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, Nemours KidsHealth.org.

The Nemours Foundation, established through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to the children, families and communities it serves. For more information, visit Nemours.org.

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