



# EQUITY AND OPTIMAL HEALTHCARE FOR BLACK CHILDREN AND YOUTH

At SickKids, we are committed to addressing the healthcare disparities affecting Black children and youth. With your support, we will drive change to improve Black health outcomes





## THE CHALLENGE

Racism in the Canadian healthcare system is real. The effects of anti-Black racism continue to result in poor healthcare outcomes and injuries, from birth to adulthood. While **health disparities for the Black community have always existed**, they have come into focus as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with structural, social, cultural and economic factors further underscoring the structural inequities and limited access to care.

## THE VISION

We see the need to improve the care and lives of children, youth and families in the Black community. We want to remove the (un)conscious biases and systemic racism that negatively affect children, youth and families, and strive to drive change towards positive outcomes for the Black community. As such, SickKids is embarking on a journey to address anti-Black racism as a social determinant of health and to ensure our vision **Healthier Children. A Better World. actively includes all children, youth and families from the Black community.**

We are committed to raising the funds needed to achieve this vision. We continue to work hand-in-hand with the Black community in order to do so. We realize building trust will take time and won't happen overnight, but we are committed to doing the work needed to get where we want to be.

## WHY SICKKIDS

SickKids is one of the world's foremost paediatric healthcare institutions. We have worked with Black communities around the world – in Ghana, South Africa, and across the Caribbean. Despite this, **we recognize we still have work to do, right here at home.**

For too long, evidence indicates the Black community has received inequitable treatment from the healthcare system which has resulted in negative personal and community outcomes. There is evidence that the healthcare system often fails Black patients and families. A 2012 report by the Wellesley Institute found that racialized groups in Canada show higher mortality and morbidity data due to bias, discrimination, and stereotyping in healthcare.

While SickKids is a leader in child health, we have been part of a system that has not fully addressed the systemic inequities that exist. We acknowledge and take responsibility to address these inherent barriers that exist for the Black community and are committed to right the wrongs.

**But we can't do it alone. We all need to be part of the change.**

## HOW PHILANTHROPY CAN HELP

SickKids is a global leader in paediatric care and as such, we have to be a leader in creating safer and more positive healthcare outcomes for Black children and families, both at home and abroad. We also believe that the most impactful change will come as a result of the guidance and support of those within the community itself. We hope you will join us in building a long-lasting relationship that will facilitate positive change.

### SICKKIDS SUPPORT OF BLACK COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE

Ghana, South Africa, and the Caribbean are just some of the regions around the world where SickKids has worked with Black communities to improve health outcomes. Through our collective efforts we have:

- Trained **27 nurses** in paediatric haematology/ oncology across the Caribbean
- Screened more than **57,000 children** for sickle cell disease at the Caribbean Institute for Health Research
- Installed telemedicine equipment in **six Caribbean countries** to enable ongoing capacity-building
- Trained more than **500 paediatric nurses** across Ghana
- **Commissioned and trained** senior leadership and medical staff from the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital in South Africa

Moving forward we will work to improve health outcomes right here at home.





# OUR FUNDING PRIORITIES

Investment in the following priority areas will help us start to achieve our goal of providing leading health outcomes at home and beyond.

## BUILD A NEW SICKLE CELL DISEASE CLINIC

The SickKids Sickle Cell Disease Clinic is the largest paediatric clinic in Canada, seeing more than 1,000 patients a year, most of whom are of African, Caribbean and Indian descent. But the clinic occupies re-purposed space, ill-designed and inappropriate for today's patient volumes and needs. As part of our campus transformation and with your support we will build a new clinic—a welcoming, accessible, and healing space that communicates to our patient families that they matter, which will make hospital visits less challenging and frequent.

## SICKLE CELL DISEASE PATIENT AMENITIES FUND

Sickle cell disease treatment is expensive. Costs not covered by government, such as transportation, medication, and accommodation add up to a considerable financial burden for families. Gifts in support of a Sickle Cell Disease Patient Amenities Fund will provide much-needed assistance to families of children with sickle cell disease so they can focus on caring for their child.

## SICKLE CELL DISEASE CONTENT ON ABOUTKIDSHALTH.CA

Providing families with evidence-based information about health issues that predominantly affect the Black community equips them to support and advocate for their child's health needs—something that is critically important to addressing health inequities for Black Canadian children and youth. Gifts in support of health resources on AboutKidsHealth.ca—the hospital's online health resource seeing 18 million plus users per year—will allow SickKids to update and expand the resources available on the site, empowering families facing conditions like sickle cell disease while also building community capacity to care for children and youth with a wide range of relevant conditions.

## SICKKIDS-CARIBBEAN INITIATIVE: VICTOR BLANCHETTE CARIBBEAN EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND

In the Caribbean, many children with cancer and serious blood disorders have been unable to receive the lifesaving care required due to a shortage of essential machines, medicines, and specialized medical professionals. Since 2013, SickKids has been working in partnership with six Caribbean countries to address these health inequities. Gifts in support of the SickKids-Caribbean Initiative will build an endowment fund to ensure the sustainability of our joint efforts, which are building capacity and improving access to local healthcare services for patients with these serious diseases.

## RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Research is one of the most powerful ways we can improve health outcomes for Black children and youth. By advancing research into the social, economic, and genetic factors that disproportionately affect the Black community, we will build evidence for change and improve our capacity to prevent, diagnose and treat everything from COVID-19 to sickle cell disease (SCD). For example, SickKids is participating in research studies aimed at delivering improved SCD treatments and cures, such as reduced-intensity bone marrow transplant and CRISPR genome editing.

## REPRESENTATION & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Improving the representation of Black Canadians within all aspects of healthcare and healthcare philanthropy is critical to our efforts. With this in mind, we will invest in a range of opportunities to recruit and develop Black healthcare and philanthropic leaders, including Research Fellowships; tuition support for the Rotman School of Business Advanced Healthcare Leadership Program; paid philanthropy internships at SickKids Foundation; and mentorship and educational support to elevate credentials and skills.





# IMPACT

To effect change we need to act.

The need to support improved health outcomes for Black communities around the world cannot be overstated. We have seen the positive results of our existing initiatives in the Caribbean, Ghana and South Africa. With your support, SickKids Foundation will continue our important work in these regions while advancing our efforts here at home. Expanding our commitment to Black communities will lead to lasting change. The outcomes we are seeking include:

- Greater patient engagement and interactivity with healthcare professionals regarding medical issues relevant to the community
- Greater representation of Black healthcare professionals
- Enhanced quality of care for Black families
- Increased patient trust and connection with the healthcare system
- An overall improved patient experience for Black children, youth and their families

Our actions will change the landscape of healthcare for Black child health worldwide.

## PATIENT STORY:

Camren has been treated at SickKids throughout his life. He was born with Sickle Cell Disease, inherited from both of his parents who carried the sickle cell trait. Patients with this disease have abnormally shaped blood cells, which have difficulty passing through veins and organs. The “sickling” of red blood cells results in pain and organ damage. Camren was also diagnosed with G6PD deficiency, which has the potential of causing further challenges with his red blood cells if he gets a fever or takes certain medications.

The severe nature of his illnesses have resulted in several admissions to SickKids’ ICU where he has received life-saving treatment, including numerous blood transfusions and surgeries. During one admission, he became completely limp—a reaction to an antibiotic he had been taking. The SickKids team worked quickly to save his life. He was placed in a medically induced coma while the team determined how he deteriorated so rapidly, and what immediate treatment he needed. During this crisis, his parents prayed by his side, asking for their son’s return to good health. Thankfully, after several days, Camren stabilized, gradually gaining his strength.

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He was eventually able to be weaned from the life-saving medications and machinery in the ICU. He then began the slow work to regain function and strength. Despite everything he has been through, he remains a clever, creative, mature young man who loves soccer, video games and brain teasers.

Because of his unique health challenges, Camren has relied on the expertise of many specialists throughout SickKids, many of them unavailable in most community hospitals. Camren and his parents are grateful to SickKids for the exceptional care he’s received throughout his life and are giving back by serving as SickKids Ambassadors.



CAMREN,  
SICKLE CELL DISEASE PATIENT



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