



**Connecticut  
Children's**  
MEDICAL CENTER

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** February 28, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Kelly Coffey, Media and Public Relations Manager  
(860) 837-5701; [kcoffey@connecticutchildrens.org](mailto:kcoffey@connecticutchildrens.org)

## **CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S AWARDED GRANT TO STUDY BEHAVIORAL PAIN INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN WITH SICKLE CELL DISEASE**

**HARTFORD, Conn.** - Connecticut Children's Medical Center has been awarded a \$38,000 grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to fund the project titled "Evaluation of Web-Based Management of Adolescent Pain (WebMAP) in Youth with Sickle Cell Disease." This study will examine whether an eight-week behavioral pain intervention program administered online via a web series to youth with sickle cell disease and their families can be effective in reducing pain and decreasing health care contacts.

"It is our hope that this project will help us reach our long term goal to develop effective, easily accessible, behavioral pain interventions for youth with sickle cell disease," explained William Zempsky, head of the Division of Pain and Palliative Medicine at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. "Ultimately, we want to be able to identify ways to reduce the long-term impact of pain on function, quality of life, and health service use in children living with this disease."

Sickle cell disease (SCD) is the most common genetic disease of individuals of African descent, affecting 100,000 children and adults in the United States. Pain is the hallmark of sickle cell disease and individuals with SCD suffer from recurrent episodes of severe, unrelenting pain. The burden of pain worsens as children transition into adolescence and young adulthood, making the treatment of SCD-related pain in childhood critically important for interrupting potential negative cycles of pain and disability from extending into adulthood. More frequent and severe

SCD-related pain can cause diminished physical function, poor quality of life, and higher health service use in children.

Web-based Management of Adolescent Pain (WebMAP), developed by project collaborator Tonya Palermo, PhD, of Seattle Children's Hospital, has been previously shown to be efficacious in a sample of adolescents with various chronic pain diagnoses. The proposed study will determine whether the WebMAP is useful and effective for pediatric SCD in particular, and explore whether the intervention is feasible and acceptable for youth.

***About Connecticut Children's Medical Center***

Connecticut Children's Medical Center is a nationally recognized, 187-bed not-for-profit children's hospital serving as the primary teaching hospital for the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. Named among the best in the nation for several of its pediatric specialties in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* "Best Children's Hospitals" rankings, Connecticut Children's is the only free-standing children's hospital in Connecticut that offers comprehensive, world-class health care to children. Our pediatric services are available at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford and at Saint Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, with neonatal intensive care units at Hartford Hospital and the University of Connecticut Health Center, along with five specialty care centers and 10 other locations across the state. Connecticut Children's has a medical staff of nearly 1,100 practicing in more than 30 specialties.

For more information, visit [www.connecticutchildrens.org](http://www.connecticutchildrens.org) or connect with us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/connecticutchildrens](https://www.facebook.com/connecticutchildrens) and Twitter at [www.twitter.com/ctchildrens](https://www.twitter.com/ctchildrens).

***About Hartford Foundation for Public Giving***

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, established in 1925, is the community foundation for 29 cities and towns in Greater Hartford. Dedicated to improving the quality of life for area residents, it receives gifts from thousands of generous individuals and families and awards grants to a broad range of area nonprofit organizations. For more information, visit [www.hfpg.org](http://www.hfpg.org) or call 860-548-1888.

###