CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SCREENING FOR SICKLE CELL DISEASE IN NEW YORK STATE

SEPTEMBER IS SICKLE CELL AWARENESS MONTH

NEW YORK STATE LEADS THE WAY

New York State's Newborn Screening Program began in 1965. At that time, one health condition was screened. In 1975, New York became the first state in the nation to add screening for sickle cell disease. 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of screening for sickle cell disease. Today, over 50 conditions are screened from a few drops of blood at birth. The goal remains the same: improving health outcomes for newborns.

Typical red blood cell Sickle cell

WHAT IS SICKLE CELL DISEASE?

Sickle cell disease is a genetic blood disorder. It affects the red blood cells that carry oxygen throughout the body. Red blood cells are typically flexible and disc-shaped. Sickle cell disease causes cells to take on a hard, sickle-like crescent shape. These cells are sticky, break down faster, and can block blood flow. This can cause:

Anemia **Painful Episodes** **Infections** **Stroke/Blood Clots** **Organ Damage**

A LIFE-CHANGING DIAGNOSIS

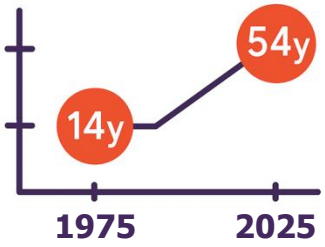
Screening newborns for sickle cell disease allows for early diagnosis. Early diagnosis and treatment can change health outcomes. Treatments now include:

- **Healthy habits and preventive health care**
- **Blood transfusions**
- **Vaccines and antibiotics to prevent infection**
- **Bone marrow or stem-cell transplant**
- **Medications to help manage pain and make healthier cells**
- **Gene therapy**

LIFE EXPECTANCY

THEN...

In the 1970s, most people with sickle cell disease did not live past 20 years old.



...NOW

With early treatment, people with sickle cell disease can live into and beyond their 50s.

KNOW YOUR SICKLE CELL STATUS

- A person who is a carrier for sickle cell disease is said to have sickle cell trait. Sickle cell trait usually does not cause health problems. Sickle cell trait does not turn into sickle cell disease.
- Two people with sickle cell trait can have a child with sickle cell disease.
- People of all races and ethnicities can have sickle cell trait and sickle cell disease.
- It is important to know your sickle cell status. Knowing your status helps you understand your chances of having a child with sickle cell disease. Ask your healthcare provider about screening for sickle cell trait and hemoglobin disorders.

(Red blood cell photo adapted from: vrogue.co)

For more information, visit: wadsworth.org/nbs

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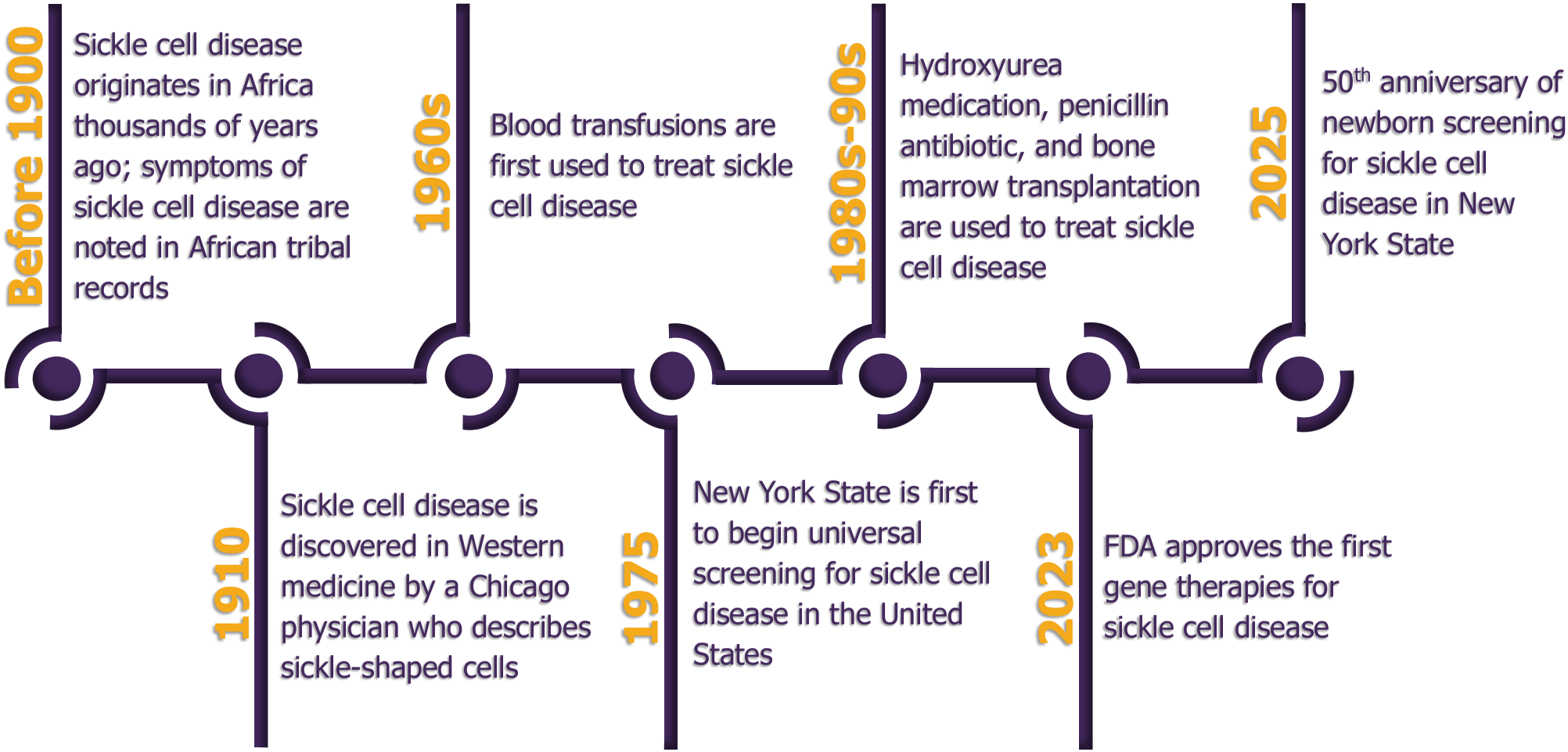

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