



# NEWS

ANTELOPE VALLEY'S  
HEALTHCARE  
NEWS RESOURCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Antelope Valley Hospital Offers Free Health Lecture:  
“Sickle Cell Disease: Pain Management and Treatments”  
Tuesday, November 13**

(LANCASTER, CA –November 8, 2007) — Sickle cell anemia is a genetic disease affecting one in every 500 African-Americans and 1 in every 1,400 Latinos born in this country. However, other ethnic groups also can have sickle cell disease. There is no cure for sickle cell disease and persons affected by the disease often experience tremendous pain, fatigue, joint swelling—and *a reduced life expectancy*. Antelope Valley Hospital (AVH) will sponsor a **free community health education** lecture titled **“Sickle Cell Disease: Pain Management and Treatments”** on **Tuesday, November 13**, from **6:00 pm to 7:00 pm**.

“Sickle cell anemia is a diagnosis often treated at Antelope Valley Hospital,” explained Felicia Williams, RN, AVH patient care coordination case manager. “To improve our quality of care for these patients, we have begun a campaign to increase the community’s education of the disease so they can monitor and manage their pain.”

As part of the awareness campaign, Antelope Valley Hospital invited Yutaka Niihara, MD from UCLA, a well-known physician that specializes in sickle cell anemia, to present the educational lecture on the treatment and management of the deadly disease.

“The average life expectancy for patients afflicted with Sickle Cell is 50 years of age,” explained Dr. Niihara. “Without proper management of the blood disease, the

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average life expectancy drops to 35 years. Patients need to learn how to respond to their disease to improve their quality of life and decrease their pain.”

The disorder affects hemoglobin, the red blood cell component that carries oxygen throughout the body. Red blood cells in individuals with sickle cell tend to stiffen, take on an abnormal shape and not function normally. People affected by sickle cell disease are often anemic, and may experience severe pains in the bones, joints or stomach. Other manifestations include serious bacterial infections, tissue and organ damage in lungs, spleen, kidneys and liver, and stroke.

“We are committed to improving the quality of care we provide to our community and one of the methods we do this is with education,” stated Edward Mirzabegian, AVH Chief Executive Officer. “Communication and patient care improves significantly when the physicians and staff understand a disease. Patient confidence also improves, which means the patient is more likely to follow recommended treatment management procedures.”

The lecture will be held in the **AVOIC building in Lancaster, 44105 15<sup>th</sup> Street West, on the fourth floor in conference room 15**. There is no charge to attend the lecture; however, lecture handouts and seating is limited so RSVPs are strongly encouraged. To reserve your seat, please call **661-726-6499**.

**About Antelope Valley Hospital**

Celebrating more than 50 years of caring for the community, Antelope Valley Hospital, a facility of Antelope Valley Healthcare District, is a non-profit, 420-bed hospital that was founded in 1955. The hospital is dedicated to providing quality care and services to everyone in the Antelope Valley. AV Hospital is located at 1600 West Avenue J in Lancaster, California. For further information, please visit [www.avhospital.org](http://www.avhospital.org) or call (661) 949-5000.

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