

# COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE



The H.U.B marks a decisive turning point in sickle cell disease treatment with gene therapy

Brussels, June 6, 2024- *The Brussels University Hospital (H.U.B.) proudly stands at the forefront of a revolutionary advancement in the treatment of sickle cell disease: gene therapy. This breakthrough marks a new era in the management of this devastating genetic disorder, offering unprecedented hope to patients and their families.*

## A Therapeutic Revolution at H.U.B.

Gene therapy represents a genuine revolution in the treatment of sickle cell disease. By directly targeting the genetic causes of the condition, this approach restores near-normal hemoglobin production. Early clinical results demonstrate remarkable efficacy, with a significant reduction in painful crises and associated complications.

The first Belgian patient treated with gene therapy received care at H.U.B., specifically at the Children's Hospital (HUDERF). To date, she is doing exceptionally well and exhibits almost no symptoms. Her testimony, featured in a film produced specifically for this occasion, will be shown on June 19 at the H.U.B. The film also provides an insight into the tireless work of H.U.B. researchers who have dedicated years to achieving these therapeutic advances.

The H.U.B. played a crucial role in the development of this groundbreaking therapy by actively participating in a foundational international clinical trial that required the collaboration of numerous researchers to validate this approach. This contribution was essential in demonstrating the efficacy and safety of gene therapy in the treatment of sickle cell disease, solidifying H.U.B.'s position as a leader in this field.

## Opening of the First Dedicated Hospital Unit

The H.U.B. is committed to continuing its fight against sickle cell disease by innovating and providing top-tier care. The Erasme and HUDERF hospitals within the H.U.B. are already at the forefront in this field, offering advanced multidisciplinary care that is unique in Belgium. To further enhance patient care, Erasme Hospital is taking a significant step forward and will present on June 19 the first inpatient unit for adolescents and adults entirely dedicated to patients suffering from this disease, along with its ambulatory pain treatment unit. These two unique structures represent a significant advancement in improving integrated care and the quality of life for patients.

The film shown on June 19 will also give a voice to those who suffer daily from this disease and to those who care for and support them.

## Special Event at H.U.B. on June 19 for World Sickle Cell Day

### Practical Information:

- **Date and Time:** June 19, 2024, from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM
- **Location:** Tagnon Auditorium, Jules Bordet Institute (H.U.B)
- **Address:** Rue Meylemeersch 90, 1070 Brussels

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## ABOUT THE ERASME HOSPITAL

The Erasmus Hospital is located on the Erasmus hospital-faculty campus, which includes the Faculty of Medicine (about 3500 students), the Faculty of Motor Sciences (about 1100 students) and the School of Public Health (about 600 students). Opened in 1977 and with a capacity of 1,048 beds, the hospital receives 25,000 to 30,000 inpatients annually and has 350,000 to 400,000 consultations. More than 4,000 members of staff, in 80 different professions, contribute on a daily basis to providing care under the sign of ambition, excellence and well-being. The Lothier Polyclinic and 2 external centres (the Traumatology and Rehabilitation Centre - CTR and the Geriatric Revalidation Centre - CRG) complete the care offer. [Erasme.be](http://Erasme.be)

## ABOUT THE QUEEN FABIOLA UNIVERSITY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL (HUDERF)

The Queen Fabiola University Children's Hospital is the only Belgian hospital exclusively dedicated to children and adolescents. By doing everything possible for the well-being of children, our hospital contributes to their being actors of their own development and to their blossoming in society. The hospital's mission is - To care for and support children, adolescents and their families through comprehensive, multidisciplinary, humanistic and excellent care. - To provide high-level teaching and research through a continuous process of innovation and development of knowledge. - To contribute actively to health education. The Children's Hospital in figures: 183 beds, nearly 135,000 consultations, more than 36,000 emergency admissions and more than 41,000 days of hospitalisation per year. More than 3,700 operations are performed in the operating area each year. More than 1,000 people work there today, representing 750 FTEs (full-time equivalents), including 170 FTE doctors (52.5 postgraduate FTEs) and 440 FTE nurses and paramedics. [Huderf.be](http://Huderf.be)

## ABOUT THE H.U.B

The Brussels University Hospital (Hôpital Universitaire de Bruxelles - H.U.B) is the academic hospital of the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), which unites the Jules Bordet institute, the Erasme Hospital and the Queen Fabiola Children's University Hospital (HUDERF) since 2021. As an international reference center, located in the heart of the Brussels Region, the H.U.B offers high quality general, oncological and pediatric care. This excellent care, accessible to all, is enriched and sustained by a dual approach of scientific research and teaching for the caregivers of tomorrow. In 2022, the H.U.B. is composed of more than 6,000 employees who share the following values: Interest of the patient, Respect, Commitment, Solidarity, Diversity and Inclusion, and the principle of Free enquiry. [Hubruxelles.be](http://Hubruxelles.be)