

# **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Stem Cell Transplantation and Advanced Cellular Therapies:**

## **Review of activity in 2023 and a look ahead to 2024**

### **About the APPG**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Stem Cell Transplantation and Advanced Cellular Therapies (APPG SCTACT) is a focal point for parliamentary discussion on the opportunities for stem cell transplantation and other cell therapies to save and improve patients' lives.

Our members are drawn from across the Houses and together provide an influential voice in Parliament for people affected by stem cell transplantation and other forms of cell therapy across the UK, many of whom have a blood cancer or blood disorder.

#### **APPG members**

- Mark Tami MP, Chair
- Clive Betts MP, Vice-Chair
- Dawn Butler MP
- Greg Clark MP
- Janet Daby MP
- Marion Fellows MP
- Baroness Finlay of Llandaff
- Colleen Fletcher MP
- Chris Green MP
- Jason McCartney MP
- Lord Mendelsohn
- Henry Smith MP
- Alison Thewliss MP

### **Successes in 2023**

This year the APPG has continued to grow in size and impact with a range of events and activities taking place in Parliament.

#### **Cost of living crisis and a Patient Travel Fund**

- The current economic climate is hitting stem cell transplant patients hard, driving up the cost of heating their homes, buying food, and travelling to and from hospital, risking their recovery. The charity Anthony Nolan has heard from patients considering postponing a potentially lifesaving stem cell transplant because they are worried that they cannot afford the cost of being out of work.
- The APPG held a public roundtable in May to discuss this issue and hear directly from those affected. Chair of the APPG, Mark Tami MP, went on to secure an adjournment debate in which he called on the government to take action to support those patients in the greatest need.

- This resulted in meetings with Ministers from the DHSC and DWP and a commitment to review the provision of transport support for immunocompromised people.

### **Shaping the design of CAR-T services**

- Scientific research into new cellular therapies is developing at unprecedented speed. Groundbreaking treatments such as CAR-T have offered people with previously incurable blood cancer the opportunity for a second chance of life.
- In January we held an event hearing from NHS and DHSC policymakers on the priority actions for the government to take to foster continued innovation in the British life sciences industry and advocate for the availability of these treatments on the NHS, for the benefit of patients up and down the country.

### **Access to new medicines**

- Many patients benefit from receiving innovative medicines to treat late effects from their stem cell transplant but there is variation in access and an increasingly uncertain commercial environment for launching new medicines.
- The APPG is concerned by any potential inequity in access and is ensuring the issue remains on the government's agenda via parliamentary questions.

## **Objectives for 2024**

The APPG SCTACT has ambitious plans for the next year including a series of events which all parliamentarians are invited to attend.

### **1. Cell and gene therapies for sickle cell**

This meeting being held on 22 January will explore how we can ensure access to and excellence in stem cell transplantation and gene therapy for patients with severe sickle cell disease.

### **2. Unmet psychological needs of stem cell transplant patients**

This meeting will raise awareness of the importance of psychological support for patients and their families/carers throughout their treatment pathway and make recommendations for the NHS and government.

### **3. Recruiting members to the APPG**

As you may be aware, new rules require that all APPGs have at least 20 members to continue operating. As the only cross-party group advocating for the needs of stem cell transplant and cellular therapy patients, our work is vital. We would be extremely grateful to you for joining and enabling us to continue with this important work.

**To join the APPG please get in touch with the secretariat at  
[public.affairs@anthonymolan.org](mailto:public.affairs@anthonymolan.org)**