

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

This Bill seeks to establish Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centres to expand access to specialized sickle cell disorder care, improve data collection and research, support education and assistance for patients, families, providers, and communities affected by sickle cell disorder, to provide a legal framework for the due management and administration of the Centres.

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

**ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES**

Clause:

1. Establishment of Sickle Cell Disorder and Therapy Centres.
2. Establishment of the Boards of the Sickle Cell Centres.
3. Membership of the Boards.
4. Tenure of office of Members of the Boards.
5. Cessation of Membership from the Boards.
6. Allowance of Members of the Board.
7. Functions of the Sickle Cell Centres.
8. Powers of the Boards.
9. Chief Medical Directors of the Sickle Cell Centres.
10. Appointment of the Director of Administration and recruitment of other staff  
of the Sickle Cell Centre.
11. Pension.
12. Appointment of Head of Clinical Services.
13. Fund.
14. Expenditure.
15. Power to accept Gifts.
16. Annual Estimates.
17. Annual Reports.
18. Power to Borrow.
19. Exemption from Tax.
20. Exemption from Customs Duties.
21. Discipline.
22. Removal and discipline of Administrative and Technical Staff.
23. Discipline of Junior Staff.
24. Regulations.
25. Power to give Directives.
26. Interpretation.
27. Citation.

Schedule.

# SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES (ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025

A Bill

For

An Act to establish Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centres to expand access to specialized sickle cell disorder care, improve data collection and research, support education and assistance for patients, families, providers, and communities affected by sickle cell disorder, to provide a legal framework for the due management and administration of the Centres; and for related matters.

**Sponsor:** *Senator Sunday Marshall Katung*

[                      ] Commencement

Enacted by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria:

- |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                     |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | (1) There is established, the Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centres (in this Bill referred to as the “Sickle Cell Centres” as specified in the Schedule to this Bill).                                                                                                        | Establishment of Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centres. |
|    | (2) The Sickle Cell Centres shall:<br>(a) be bodies corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue or be sued in their corporate names; and<br>(b) acquire, hold, mortgage, purchase and deal howsoever with property, whether movable or immovable, real or personal. |                                                                     |
|    | (3) The President may, by order published in the Federal Government Gazette, increase, vary or delete the Sickle Cell Centres specified in the Schedule to this Bill.                                                                                                                     |                                                                     |
|    | (4) This Bill shall apply to any other Sickle Cell Centre established after the commencement of this Bill.                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                     |
| 2. | There is established for the management of each Sickle Cell Centre, a Board of Management (in this Bill referred to as "the Board") which shall be constituted and have the functions and powers set out in this Bill.                                                                    | Establishment of the Boards of Sickle Cell Centres.                 |
| 3. | (1) The Board shall consist of:<br>(a) a part-time Chairperson;<br>(b) the Chief Medical Director of the Sickle Cell Centre;<br>(c) the Head of Clinical Services;                                                                                                                        | Membership of the Boards.                                           |

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

- (d) the Director of Administration and Human Resources who shall be the Secretary of the Board;
    - (e) one representative each of the:
      - (i) Federal Ministry of Health not below the rank of an Assistant Director;
      - (ii) regulatory body for medical doctors and the medical profession in Nigeria;
      - (iii) state Ministry of Health not below the rank of Assistant Director wherever the Sickle Centre is situated.
    - (f) three persons to represent public interest.
  - (2) The Chairman and Members of the Board, other than ex-officio members shall be:
    - (a) appointed by the President; and
    - (b) persons of proven integrity and ability.
  - (3) The supplementary provisions set out in the Schedule to this Bill shall have effect with respect to the proceedings of the Board and other matters contained in it.
4. Subject to the provisions of Clause 5 of this Bill, members of the Board, other than ex-officio members, shall each hold office: Tenure of Office.
- (a) for a term of four years in the first instance and may be re-appointed for a further term of four years and no more; and
  - (b) on such terms and conditions as may be specified in the letter of appointment.
5. (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of Clause 4 of this Bill, a person shall cease to hold office as a member of the Board if the person: Cessation of Membership.
- (a) becomes bankrupt, suspends payment of principal loan with his creditors;
  - (b) is convicted of a felony or any offence involving dishonesty or fraud;
  - (c) becomes of unsound mind or is incapable of carrying out his or her duties;
  - (d) is guilty of a serious misconduct in relation to his or her duties;

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

- (e) in the case of a person possessed of professional qualifications, is disqualified or suspended, other than at the person's own request, from practising the person's profession in any part of the world by an order of a competent authority made in respect of that member; or
    - (f) resigns appointment by a letter addressed to the President.
  - (2) Where a member of the Board ceases to hold office for any reason, before the expiration of the term for which such a member is appointed, another person representing the same interest as that member shall be appointed to the Board for the unexpired term.
  - (3) A member of the Board may be removed by the President if the President is satisfied that it is not in the interest of the Sickie Cell Centre or the public that the member continues in office.
- 6. There shall be paid to every member of the Board such allowances and expenses as the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission may determine. Allowances of Members.
- 7. (1) The Centres shall: Functions of the Centres.
  - (a) provide facilities for diagnostic, curative, preventive and rehabilitative services in the management of sickle cell disorder;
  - (b) construct, equip, maintain and operate such training schools and similar institutions as the Board considers necessary for providing the hospital at all times with a proper staff of hospital technicians and nurses;
  - (c) construct, equip, maintain and operate such clinics, out-patient departments, laboratories, research or experimental stations and other like institutions as the Board considers necessary for the efficient functioning of the hospital;
  - (d) generate and sustain a reference and allied data base on sickle cell disorders in Nigeria;
  - (e) carry out counseling services to patients, parents and other carriers of the sickle cell trait;
  - (f) serve as a reference laboratory centre for the accurate diagnosis of sickle cell disorder;

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

- (g) offer prenatal diagnosis of sickle cell disorder to couples or women at risk of bearing affected offspring;
  - (h) maintain a reference library on sickle cell and related disorder;
  - (i) promote, fund and carry out worthwhile research into various aspects of sickle cell disorder;
  - (j) constantly monitor and periodically evaluate services provided in pursuance of the aims and objectives of the Sickle Cell Centre;
  - (k) offer appropriate educational and training courses to various cadres of health care personnel;
  - (l) liaise with other national and international bodies as may be necessary in pursuance of the aims and objectives of the Sickle Cell Centre; and
  - (m) advise the 3 levels of the national health care system on the introduction and co-ordination of services appropriate to the management and control of sickle cell disorder in Nigeria.
- (2) The Board shall ensure that the standards of research and training provided at all the Sickle Cell Centres, and the standards of treatment and care provided for patients at those establishments do not fall below those usually provided by similar establishments of international repute.
- (3) Subject to this Bill, the Board shall perform such other functions which in its opinion are calculated to facilitate the performance of its functions under this Bill.

8.

The Board shall have powers to:

Powers of the Board.

- (a) provide the general policies and guidelines relating to major expansion programmes of the Sickle Cell Centres;
- (b) subject to the provisions of this Act, make, alter and revoke rules and regulations for performing the functions of the Sickle Cell Centres;
- (c) fix terms and conditions of service including the remuneration of employees of the Sickle Cell Centres subject to the approval of the National Salaries Incomes and Wages Commission; and

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

(d) do such other things that in the opinion of the Board are necessary to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of the Sickle Cell Centres

9. (1) There shall be for each Sickle Cell Centre a Chief Medical Director who shall be appointed by the President on such terms and conditions as may be specified in his letter of appointment or as may be determined by the Federal Government. Chief Medical Directors of the Sickle Cell Centres.
- (2) The Chief Medical Director shall-
- (a) be the Chief Executive and accounting officer of the Sickle Cell Centre;
  - (b) be responsible to the Board for the administration of the Sickle Cell Centre;
  - (c) be appointed for a term of four years in the first instance and may be reappointed for a further term of four years subject to satisfactory performance;
  - (d) be a medical practitioner with:
    - (i) a first Degree in MBBS and registered with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN); and
    - (ii) 12 years post-MBBS qualification.
  - (e) Have considerable cognate experience in matters relating to sickle cell disorder; and
  - (f) hold a post-graduate specialist qualification obtained at least 10 years prior to the appointment as Medical Director.
10. (1) The Chief Medical Director of each of the Sickle Cell Centres shall, with the approval of the Board, appoint a Director of Administration, who shall- Appointment of Director of Administration and recruitment of other staff of the Sickle Cell Centres.
- (a) be responsible to the Chief Medical Director for the effective functioning of all the administrative divisions of the Sickle Cell Centre;
  - (b) conduct the correspondence and keep records of the Sickle Cell Centre; and perform such other functions as the Chief Medical Director may assign to such Director of Administration.

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

- (2) The Directors appointed under subclause (1) of this Clause shall each be responsible to the Chief Medical Directors for the effective running of the clinical services, the finance, accounts and the co-ordination of the maintenance of the Sickle Cell Centres, as the case may be.
  - (3) The Chief Medical Director of each of the Sickle Cell Centres shall, with the approval of the Board, appoint for the Sickle Cell Centres such number of employees as may in the opinion of the Board be necessary for the proper and efficient performance of the functions of the Sickle Cell Centre.
  - (4) Notwithstanding the provisions of subclauses (1) and (2) of this Clause, the Medical Director of each of the Medical Centre shall have power to appoint for the Sickle Cell Centre, either directly or on secondment from any public service in the Federation, such number of employees as may, in the opinion of the Board, be required to assist the Sickle Cell Centre in the performance of any of their functions under this Bill.
  - (5) Nothing in subclause (4) shall preclude each Chief Medical Director from appointing persons from outside the public service of the Federation or of the State whenever the Chief Medical Director thinks it necessary to do so.
  - (6) The terms and conditions of service of the employees of the Sickle Cell Centres shall be as determined by the National Salaries Income and Wages Commission.
11. (1) Service in the Sickle Cell Centres shall be approved service for the purposes of the Pensions Reforms Act. Service in the Sickle Cell Centres to be pensionable.
- (2) The officers and other persons employed in the Sickle Cell Centres shall be entitled to pensions, gratuities and other retirement benefits as enjoyed by persons holding equivalent grades in the public service of the Federation. [Act No. 4, 2014]
  - (3) Nothing in subclauses (1) and (2) shall prevent the appointment of a person to any office on terms which preclude the grant of pension and gratuity in respect of that office.

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

12. (1) The Chief Medical Director shall, with the approval of the Board, establish for each of the Sickle Cell Centres a Department of Clinical Services which shall-
- Appointment of Head of Clinical Services.
- (a) consist of a Head of Clinical Services who shall be a Director and such number of other members;
- (b) be answerable to the Medical Director; and
- (c) be in charge of all the medical or training activities in the Sickle Cell Centre.
- (2) Subject to this Bill, each Chief Medical Director shall have power to appoint either directly or on secondment, and discipline consultants holding or acting in any office in the Sickle Cell Centres, and any such appointment shall be made having due regard to the approved personnel establishment of the Sickle Cell Centres.
- (3) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, the Chief Medical Director may, with the approval of the Board, appoint consultants outside the hospital to perform such medical duties as the Chief Medical Director may assign to such consultants.
13. There shall be established and maintained for each of the Sickle Cell Centres a fund into which shall be paid and credited:
- Fund of the Sickle Cell Centres
- (a) all subventions and budgetary allocation from the Government of the Federation;
- (b) all fees and funds accruing from the sale of drugs and other services;
- (c) all sums to the Sickle Cell Centres by way of gifts, endowments, bequests, grants or other contributions by persons and organisations;
- (d) foreign aid and assistance from bilateral agencies; and
- (e) all other sums that may accrue to the Sickle Cell Centres.
14. The Sickle Cell Centres shall apply the fund at their disposal to-
- Expenditure of the Sickle Cell Centres
- (a) the cost of administration and maintenance of the Sickle Cell Centres;
- (b) publicise and promote the activities of the Sickle Cell Centres;

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

- (c) pay allowances, expenses and other benefits of members of the Board and Committees of the Board;
- (d) pay salaries, allowances and benefits of employees of the Sickle Cell Centres;
- (e) pay other overhead allowances, benefits and administrative costs of the Sickle Cell Centres; and
- (f) undertake such other activities as are connected with all or any of the functions of the Sickle Cell centres under this Bill.

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|-----|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 15. | (1) | The Sickle Cell Centres may accept gifts of land, money or other property on such terms and conditions, as may be specified by the person or organisation making the gift.                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Power to accept gifts.            |
|     | (2) | The Sickle Cell Centres shall not accept any gift if the conditions attached by the person or organisation making the gift are inconsistent with the functions of the Sickle Cell Centres under this Bill.                                                                                                                                                                              |                                   |
| 16. | (1) | Each Chief Medical Director shall with the approval of the Board, submit to the Minister, not later than 30th June in each year, an estimate of the expenditure and income of the Sickle Cell Centre during the succeeding year.                                                                                                                                                        | Annual estimates and expenditure. |
|     | (2) | Each Chief Medical Director shall cause to be kept proper accounts of the Sickle Cell Centre in respect of each year and proper records in relation to it and shall cause the accounts to be audited not later than six months after the end of each year by auditors appointed from the list and in accordance with the guidelines supplied by the Auditor-General for the Federation. |                                   |
| 17. |     | Each Chief Medical Director shall with the approval of the Board, prepare and submit to the Minister, not later than 30th June in each year, a report on the activities of the Sickle Centre during the immediately preceding year, and shall include in the report a copy of the audited accounts of the Sickle Cell Centres for that year and the auditor's report on it.             | Annual Report.                    |
| 18. | (1) | The Sickle Cell Centres may borrow, by overdraft or otherwise, such sums as they may require for the performance of their functions under this Bill.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Power to borrow.                  |
|     | (2) | The Sickle Cell Centres shall not, without the approval of the President, borrow money which exceeds, at any time, the limit set by the President                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                   |

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

- (3) Notwithstanding subclause (1) of this Clause, where the sum to be borrowed is in foreign currency, the Sickle Cell Centres shall not borrow the sum without the prior approval of the President.
19. (1) The Sickle Cell Centres shall not pay income tax on any income derived by the Sickle Cell Centres under this Bill or accruing to them from any of their investments. Exemption from Tax.
- (2) The provisions of any enactment relating to the taxation of companies or trust funds shall not apply to the Board of the Sickle Cell Centres.
20. The Sickle Cell Centres shall not pay customs duty on or be restricted or prohibited from importing any equipment, material, supply and any other thing required by the Sickle Cell Centres for the purposes of this Bill: Exemption from Custom Duties.  
Provided that nothing in this Clause shall be construed as preventing the Nigeria Customs Service from inspecting any equipment, or material imported by the Sickle Cell Centres.
21. Nothing in this Bill shall affect the provisions of any enactment relating to the discipline of medical practitioners, pharmacists, midwives, nurses or members of any other profession or calling. Discipline.
22. (1) If it appears to the Board that there are reasons for believing that any person employed as a member of the clinical, administrative or technical staff of any of the Sickle Cell Centres, other than the Chief Medical Director should be removed from his office or employment, the Board shall require the Director of Administration to: Removal and discipline of clinical, administrative and technical staff.
- (a) give notice of those reasons to the person in question;
  - (b) afford him an opportunity of making representations in person on the matter to the Board; and
  - (c) if the person in question so requests, within a period of one month beginning with the date of the notice, make arrangements for:
    - (i) a committee to investigate the matter and report on it to the Board; and
    - (ii) the person in question to be afforded an opportunity of appearing before and being heard by an investigating Committee set up with respect to the matter, and if the Board, after considering the report of the investigating

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

committee, is satisfied that the person in question should be removed, the Board may remove such a person by a letter signed on the direction of the Board.

- (2) The Chief Medical Director may, in a case of misconduct by a member of the staff which in the opinion of the Chief Medical Director is prejudicial to the interest of the Sickle Cell Centre, suspend any such member and any such suspension shall immediately be reported to the Board.
- (3) For good cause, any member of staff may be suspended from his or her duties or his or her appointment may be terminated or he or she may be dismissed by the Board.
- (4) Any person suspended shall, subject to subclauses (2) and (3) of this Clause, be on half pay and the Board shall before the expiration of a period of three months after the date of such suspension consider the case against that person and come to a decision as whether to:
  - (a) continue the person's suspension and if so, on what terms, including the proportion of his emoluments to be paid to such a person;
  - (b) reinstate the person, in which case the Board shall restore the full emoluments of such a person with effect from the date of suspension;
  - (c) terminate the appointment of the person concerned, in which case such a person shall not be entitled to the proportion of those emoluments withheld during the period of suspension; or
  - (d) take such lesser disciplinary action against the person, including the restoration of his emoluments that might have been withheld, as the Board may determine, and in any case where the Board, under this Clause, decides to continue a person's suspension or decides to take further disciplinary action against a person, the Board shall before the expiration of a period of three months from such decision come to a final determination in respect of the case concerning any such person.

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

- (5) The person by whom a letter of removal is signed under subclause (1) of this Clause to use best endeavours to cause a copy of the letter to be immediately served on the person to whom it relates.
23. (1) Where any junior staff is accused of misconduct or inefficiency, the Medical Director may suspend him for not more than a period of three months and shall direct a Committee to-
- Discipline of Junior Staff.
- (a) consider the case; and
- (b) make recommendations as to the appropriate action to be taken by the Chief Medical Director.
- (2) In all cases under this Clause, the officer shall be informed of the charge against such officer and given a reasonable opportunity to defend the charge.
- (3) The Chief Medical Director may, after considering the recommendation made under subclause (1) (b) of this Bill, dismiss, or take such other disciplinary action against the officer concerned.
- (4) Any person aggrieved by a decision of the Chief Medical Director made under subclause (3) of this Clause may, within a period of 21 days from the date of the letter communicating the decision to such a person, address a petition to the Board to reconsider the person's case.
24. The Sickle Cell Centres shall, with the approval of the Minister, make regulations:
- Regulations.
- (a) as to the access of the members of the public either generally or of a particular class, to premises under the control of the Sickle Cell Centres and the orderly conduct of members of the public;
- (b) for safeguarding any property belonging to or controlled by the Sickle Cell Centres from damage by members of the public; and
- (c) for giving full effect to the provisions of this Bill.
25. The Minister may give to the Board, directions of a general character or relating generally to particular matters, but not to any individual person or case, with regard to the exercise by the Board of its functions under this Bill, and the Board shall comply with the directions but no direction shall be given which is inconsistent with the duties of the Board under this Bill.
- Power to give directives.
26. In this Bill:
- “Board”** means the Board of Management of each Sickle Cell Centre;
- Interpretation.

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

**"Chairman"** means the Chairman of the Board;

**"functions"** include powers and duties;

**"good cause"** means a conviction for any offence which the Board considers to be such as to render the person concerned unfit for the performance of the functions of his office; any physical or mental incapacity which the Board, after obtaining medical advice, considers to be such as to render the person concerned unfit to continue to hold his office; conduct of a scandalous or other disgraceful nature which the Board considers to be such as to render the person concerned unfit to continue to hold his office; or conduct which the Board considers to be such as to constitute a failure or inability of the person concerned to discharge the functions of his office or to comply with the terms and conditions of his service.

**"Sickle Cell Centres"** means the Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centres, established under Clause 1 of this Bill;

**"Junior Staff"** means staff of such grade as may be determined by the Board; and

**"Minister"** means the Minister charged with responsibility for matters relating to health.

27. This Bill may be cited as the Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centres (Establishment) Bill, 2025 Citation.

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

**SCHEDULE**

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT, ETC.

*Terms of Service.*

1. There may be paid to the Members of the Board of Management or any Committee, other than ex-officio members, such remuneration and allowances as may from time to time be determined by the President.
2. Where a vacancy occurs in respect of the membership specified in Clause 3, it shall be filled by the appointment of a successor to hold office for the remainder of the term of office of his/her predecessor.
3. The Board of Management may act notwithstanding any vacancy in its membership or any defect in the appointment of a member or the absence of a Member.

*List of Sickle Cell Centres.*

- (a) *Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centre, FCT, Abuja*
- (b) *Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centre, Gombe*
- (c) *Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centre, Lafia;*
- (d) *Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centre, Kaduna;*
- (e) *Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centre, Akure;*
- (f) *Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centre, Awka; and*
- (g) *Sickle Cell Disorder Research and Therapy Centre, Calabar.*

*Proceedings.*

4. (1) The Board of Management shall meet for the conduct of business at such times, places and on such days as the Chairman may appoint but shall meet not less than once every four months.
- (2) The Chairman may at any time and shall at the request in writing of not less than six members, convene a meeting of the Board of Management.
- (3) Where the Governing Council desires to obtain the advise of any person on any particular matter, the Board may co-opt persons who are not members of the Board of Management but person co-opted shall not be entitled to vote at a meeting of the Board of Management.
- (4) The Quorum of the Board shall be one half of the total Members of the Board, at least one of whom shall be a member appointed by the President.

**SICKLE CELL DISORDER RESEARCH AND THERAPY CENTRES  
(ESTABLISHMENT) BILL, 2025**

*Miscellaneous.*

5. (1) The fixing of the seal of the Centres shall be authenticated by the signature of the Chairperson, and of some other members of the Board of Management authorized generally by the Board of Management to act for that purpose.
- (2) Any contract or instrument which if made or executed by a person other than a body corporate would not be required to be under seal may be made executed on behalf of the Sickle Cell Centres by any person generally or specially authorized to act for that purpose by the Board of Management.
- (3) Any document purporting to be duly executed under the seal of the Sickle Cell Centres shall be received in evidence and shall unless the contrary is proved, be presumed to be so executed.