Patterson Testimony HB0060.pdf

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Position: FAV

Edith J. Patterson, Ed.D.
Legislative District 28
Charles County

Ways and Means Committee

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony in Support of HB0060 - Sickle Cell Disease - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser and Members of the House Appropriations Committee. For the record, I am Delegate Edith Patterson, sponsor of HB0060 Education – Public Health – Sickle Cell Disease – Education and Awareness Campaign.

This legislation is inspired by a personal experience I had with a student afflicted by Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) who was a senior at a Historically Black College in Maryland. During a crisis, she was unable to attend her classes, complete assignments, or engage fully in her education. She reached out to me for assistance, and her situation highlighted the profound challenges that students with SCD face in balancing their health and academic responsibilities.

As you may know, SCD is a chronic condition that can significantly impact students' academic performance and overall school experience. While most students with SCD have normal learning abilities when they are not experiencing symptoms, the unpredictable nature of the disease often creates unique challenges that require thoughtful accommodations and support. Frequent pain crises, fatigue, and other complications can lead to missed school days, difficulty concentrating, and lower academic performance if proper systems are not in place.

HB0060 seeks to address these challenges by encouraging the Maryland Department of Health to develop education and awareness campaigns to implement tailored programs and policies to support students with SCD, including accommodations; collaboration with healthcare providers is critical to ensuring that schools are prepared to manage a student's medical needs, particularly during pain crises; and awareness and training to educate teachers, administrators, and staff about SCD. Awareness training would help staff identify symptoms, respond appropriately during crises, and better understand the needs of students with SCD.

Given the significant challenges faced by students with SCD, this legislation is an essential step toward ensuring that schools provide the accommodations and support these students need to succeed academically. By requiring the Department of Health to create individualized plans, promote awareness training, and establish consistent access to medical resources, Maryland can improve the educational experiences and outcomes for students with SCD and serve as a model for other states.

In summary, HB0060 is a straightforward yet impactful measure to support students at institutions of higher education who have Sickle Cell Disease. It addresses a critical gap in educational equity and ensures that students with SCD have the resources and support they need to thrive academically despite the challenges posed by their condition. I respectfully urge you to give HB0060 a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration,
Edith Patterson, Charles County

2026 HB60 NAPNAP.pdf

Uploaded by: JD Murphy

Position: FAV

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners℠
MD: CHESAPEAKE

January 23rd, 2026

Maryland House of Representatives
Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) Maryland Chesapeake Chapter, we are writing to express our **support of HB60 Sickle Cell Disease - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns.**

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) affects approximately 100,000 Americans, with a disproportionate impact on African American communities. In Maryland, we serve a significant population of children and young adults living with SCD who deserve the opportunity to pursue their educational goals without facing unnecessary barriers or health crises due to inadequate institutional support and awareness. SCD often creates invisible disabilities, with impacts on educational endeavors due it's multi-system effects and requires specific accommodations to ensure their academic success and overall well-being. For example, pain crises are unpredictable and may lead to students being unable to provide full attention to course work. These students are immunocompromised, so may not be able to attend in-person classes during disease outbreaks. Ensuring access or services to students and requiring reasonable accommodations is essential for creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment. The development of an education and awareness campaign will also ensure that faculty and staff are well-informed about the needs of students with SCD, fostering a more understanding and accommodating campus culture.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chesapeake Chapter of NAPNAP extends their support of **HB60 Sickle Cell Disease - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns and requests a favorable report.** The pediatric APRNs of your state are grateful for your attention to these crucial issues. The Maryland Chapter of NAPNAP membership includes over 200 primary and acute care pediatric nurse practitioners who are committed to improving the health and advocating for our state's pediatric patients. If we can be of any further assistance, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Maryland Chapter legislative chair, Dr. JD Murphy, pediatric hematology/oncology nurse practitioner, at mdchesnapnapleg@outlook.com.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jessica D. Murphy DNP, CPNP-AC, CPHON, CNE
Maryland Chapter Legislative Chair

Evgenia Ogordova

Dr. Evgenia Ogorodova DNP, CPNP-PC
Chapter Legislative Co-Chair

Yvette Laboy

Dr. Yvette Laboy DNP, CPNP-AC,
CCRN, CPN; Chapter President

Lindsay J. Ward

Ms. Lindsay Ward MSN, CPNP-PC,
IBCLC; Immediate Past-President

Samantha Hoffman

Dr. Samantha Hoffman DNP, MS,
CPNP-PC; Chapter President-elect

HB 60_ ??Caregiver. Sickle Cell Disease - Institut

Uploaded by: Loretta Hoffman

Position: FAV

HB 60: Sickle Cell Disease - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns

Position: Favorable

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Loretta Hoffman**, and I am the mother and primary caregiver of a **sickle cell warrior who matriculated through higher education**. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of **House Bill 60** because I have personally experienced the consequences of inadequate and inconsistent support for sickle cell warriors navigating Maryland's colleges and universities.

Caring for a sickle cell warrior in higher education is far more complex than most institutions recognize. My child has endured unpredictable pain crises, severe fatigue, frequent medical appointments, and hospitalizations while being held to rigid academic expectations. Despite medical documentation and repeated communication, our family often encountered delays, confusion, and resistance when requesting reasonable accommodations. Each academic term became a cycle of advocacy, stress, and uncertainty rather than a stable and supportive educational experience.

As a caregiver, I was forced to fill gaps the institution should have addressed—coordinating with faculty, explaining the medical realities of sickle cell disease, appealing accommodation decisions, and ensuring my child did not fall through the cracks. The absence of a clear, standardized accommodation process placed an unnecessary burden not only on my sickle cell warrior, but also on me as a parent and caregiver striving to balance health, academics, and survival.

House Bill 60 would meaningfully change this experience for families like mine. By establishing clearer expectations and accountability for institutions of higher education, this bill ensures accommodations for sickle cell warriors and others with chronic and genetic conditions are timely, consistent, and proactive rather than reactive. HB 60 recognizes that sickle cell warriors do not need lowered academic standards—they need equitable access and reasonable flexibility so their health does not jeopardize their education.

At its heart, this bill addresses a critical injustice. Sickle cell disease disproportionately affects Black and underserved communities, where existing gaps in our educational systems can turn a medical crisis into a permanent academic and economic setback. We cannot accept a reality where sickle cell warriors must sacrifice their education to manage their health, or where caregivers fight in isolation for simple accommodations. House Bill 60 affirms that Maryland's colleges and universities must include and actively support these students, ensuring their pathways are not blocked by institutional barriers. I respectfully urge you to advance this vital measure with a favorable report.

Thank you

Respectfully submitted,
Loretta Hoffman

Testimony in Support of HB0060
Delegate Patterson

Good afternoon. My name is Nikia K. Vaughan and I serve as the Executive Director of the Maryland Sickle Cell Disease Association.

I am here today in strong support of House Bill 0060. I offer this testimony not only as a professional leader in the sickle cell community but also as a mother of two children living with chronic illnesses including sickle cell disease. This issue is deeply personal for me.

Recently I spent time with students I call the invisible warriors at Morgan State University. These are capable driven students managing a lifelong unpredictable disease while pursuing higher education. During these conversations a senior shared that some professors do not allow excused absences or makeup work even when students are hospitalized or experiencing a sickle cell crisis.

One student shared something even more troubling. They explained that they attended class while actively in pain because they feared the academic consequences of being absent. No student should ever have to choose between their health and their education yet for students living with sickle cell disease this choice happens far too often.

As a parent this is deeply concerning. My daughter will be a freshman in high school next year. She is an aspiring artist living with sickle cell disease and has already accomplished so much including serving as the inaugural in house artist at the inaugural Sickle Cell Summit as a guest of US Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra. She dreams of attending the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore.

As she becomes college bound I think about the systems that will either support her or fail her when she becomes ill. Will she be believed Will compassion guide policy Or will she be expected to push through pain to prove she belongs.

House Bill 0060 is about dignity equity and access. It ensures institutions of higher education have clear policies informed faculty and meaningful education so students with sickle cell disease are supported not penalized.

As both the Executive Director of the Maryland Sickle Cell Disease Association and a parent I urge a favorable report on HB0060. Our students deserve learning environments that honor both their potential and their health.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

SCCM Testimony Bill H60.pdf

Uploaded by: Nyree Crowell

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of HB 60

Sickle Cell Disease – Institutions of Higher Education

Position: Favorable

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nyree Crowell, and I am a college student testifying in support of House Bill 60. While I do not live with sickle cell disease myself, I have been directly affected by it through a close family member. Watching someone I love navigate this condition has shaped my understanding of how deeply sickle cell disease disrupts daily life—especially for students pursuing higher education.

Sickle cell disease does not operate on a schedule. Pain crises and medical emergencies arise suddenly and require immediate attention. I have seen how these episodes force students to miss class, exams, and academic deadlines, not out of lack of commitment, but out of medical necessity. Despite this reality, colleges and universities are often unprepared to respond in a consistent and compassionate way.

What stands out most is how much responsibility is placed on students to advocate for themselves during moments of medical crisis. Instead of receiving built-in protections, students are often required to repeatedly disclose personal medical information, negotiate accommodations with individual professors, and hope for understanding that is not guaranteed. This lack of standardized procedures creates unnecessary stress and puts students with sickle cell disease at risk of falling behind academically through no fault of their own.

House Bill 60 offers a solution by establishing clear expectations for institutions of higher education. By requiring reasonable accommodations, defined reporting procedures, and education for faculty and staff, this bill shifts the burden off students and onto institutions where it belongs. It ensures that support is not dependent on chance, personal relationships, or individual discretion.

This legislation is about ensuring equal access to education. Students living with sickle cell disease should be evaluated on their abilities and efforts—not penalized for managing a serious, lifelong medical condition. Higher education should be a space where students are supported, not forced to choose between their health and their academic future.

For families like mine, HB 60 represents progress, accountability, and respect. It acknowledges the realities of sickle cell disease and takes meaningful steps to ensure students can pursue their education safely and successfully.

I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 60.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective and for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,
Nyree Crowell

HB.60 Sickle Cell Coalition of Maryland .pdf

Uploaded by: Sickle Cell Coalition of Maryland

Position: FAV

Sickle Cell Coalition of Maryland

HB 60: Sickle Cell Disease - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies,
Procedures, and Educational Campaigns
Position: Favorable

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

House Bill 60 addresses a critical and persistent gap in how Maryland's institutions of higher education support students living with serious genetic and rare diseases, including sickle cell disease. This legislation ensures that students with complex, chronic medical conditions are not placed at an academic disadvantage due to health circumstances beyond their control.

Students with sickle cell disease frequently experience unpredictable pain crises, fatigue, hospitalizations, and medical complications that directly interfere with class attendance, examinations, and coursework. Despite existing federal protections, many students continue to face inconsistent accommodation processes, delayed approvals, and inflexible academic policies that undermine their ability to remain enrolled and make timely progress toward graduation.

HB 60 provides needed clarity and accountability. By establishing clearer expectations for institutions of higher education, the bill strengthens implementation of disability protections and shifts accommodations from discretionary, case-by-case decisions to more standardized and proactive practices. This consistency reduces unnecessary administrative barriers while ensuring that students receive reasonable academic flexibility aligned with their documented medical needs.

The bill also advances educational equity. Sickle cell disease disproportionately affects Black and underserved communities, and gaps in institutional support contribute to higher withdrawal rates, interrupted academic pathways, and long-term economic consequences. HB 60 helps ensure that capable and motivated students are not forced to choose between managing a life-threatening illness and completing their education. Importantly, HB 60 does not lower academic standards. Instead, it removes preventable structural barriers that impede student success and affirms that students with chronic and genetic conditions belong in Maryland's colleges and universities with the support necessary to thrive.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 60.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Teanika Hoffman,MA,CHW
Founder & Executive Director of the Sickle Cell Coalition of Maryland
sicklecellcoalitionofmd.org

HB 60. Teanika.Hoffman Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Teanika Hoffman
Position: FAV

HB 60: Sickle Cell Disease - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns

Position: Favorable

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Teanika Hoffman, and I am a person living with sickle cell disease. I am here today in support of House Bill 60 because I know firsthand what it means to pursue higher education while managing a serious, lifelong medical condition—without adequate institutional support.

As a student, I missed classes due to hospitalizations, pain crises, and medical complications directly related to my sickle cell disease. These absences were not a choice. They were necessary for my survival. Yet, despite providing documentation and communicating my needs, I was not consistently supported by my university. Accommodations were unclear, delayed, or denied, and I was often made to feel as though my illness was an inconvenience rather than a legitimate medical condition.

Instead of receiving flexibility, I faced rigid attendance policies, limited understanding from faculty, and a lack of coordination between disability services and academic departments. I was expected to perform as though my condition did not exist. At times, this made continuing my education more difficult than managing the disease itself.

House Bill 60 would have made a meaningful difference in my academic experience. This legislation sets clear expectations for institutions of higher education to support students living with sickle cell disease and other serious medical conditions. It ensures that students are not left to navigate inconsistent accommodation systems or repeatedly justify their health needs to remain in good academic standing.

HB 60 is not about asking for special treatment. It is about fairness, access, and equity. Students with sickle cell disease are capable, motivated, and deserving of the opportunity to succeed academically without being penalized for medical realities beyond their control. No student should have to choose between attending class and going to the hospital.

If HB 60 had been in place during my time as a student, I believe my educational journey would have been less stressful, more stable, and more supportive. I want current and future students living with sickle cell disease to attend Maryland's colleges and universities knowing their health will be respected and their education protected.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 60.

Thank you for allowing me to share my experience and for considering this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Teanika Hoffman,MA,CHW

Sickle Cell Patient

HB 60 - LBCMD Priority Bill.pdf

Uploaded by: Ufuoma Agarin

Position: FAV

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January 27, 2026

Chair Ben Barnes
Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 0060 - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns. This critical legislation advances public health equity, improves student wellness outcomes, and strengthens institutional readiness to support students living with sickle cell disease. House Bill 60 reflects Maryland's commitment to ensuring that students with chronic health conditions, particularly those that disproportionately impact minority communities, are met with informed and consistent care across higher education systems.

House Bill 60 directly addresses a long-standing health disparity that has disproportionately affected generations of Black Marylanders living with sickle cell disease. Sickle cell disease is a serious, lifelong condition that can lead to pain crisis, fatigue, organ complications, and frequent hospitalization. Because sickle cell disease primarily impacts individuals of African descent, this bill is especially meaningful for Black students across Maryland's public colleges and universities, including those attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Establishing formal policies and procedures ensuring that students are not left navigating inconsistent support systems or avoiding barriers to academic success.

Additionally, this bill strengthens institutional accountability by requiring institutions of higher education to implement clear policies, procedures, and campus-based educational campaigns. These measures promote awareness among faculty, staff, and students, reduce stigma, and improve the ability of campus communities to respond appropriately to sickle cell- related emergencies. Increasing awareness and preparedness on campus can help prevent delays in care, improve accommodations and reduce the likelihood that students with sickle cell disease are misunderstood or unfairly penalized due to health-related absences or limitations.

HB 60 also supports equitable student success by helping ensure that health challenges do not become barriers to graduation and long term economic mobility. For many students living with sickle cell disease, managing symptoms while maintaining academic performance requires flexibility, understanding and support. By establishing consistent institutional procedures, House Bill 60 helps ensure that students can remain enrolled, access appropriate resources, and complete their degrees. This bill strengthens Maryland's readiness, and ensures all students, regardless of health status, have a fair opportunity to thrive.

Ultimately, House Bill 60 prompts a healthier, more inclusive, and more responsive higher educational environment. This legislation is a necessary step toward closing health equity gaps and ensuring that Maryland's institutions of higher education are equipped to serve every student.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland asks this Committee to vote favorably on House Bill 60.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland

RDAC_HB0060.pdf

Uploaded by: Ada Hamosh
Position: FWA

Maryland Department of Health
Rare Disease Advisory Council

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

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Council Coordinator

Lauren Whiteman, MPH,

January 23, 2026

Re: House Bill 60
Support, with amendments

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
The Honorable Anne Kaiser, Vice Chair
Maryland House of Delegates
Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Barnes and members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Rare Disease Advisory Council (RDAC) in support, with amendments, of House Bill 60. The RDAC is a legislated Governor's Advisory Council tasked with improving access to care and outcomes for people in Maryland living with Rare Disease. Sickle Cell Disease is a relatively common rare disease in Maryland. It, like many others, waxes and wanes with periods of good health and periods of severe pain and/or chest syndrome and an increased risk of strokes.

We support all provisions of this legislation but recommend its extension beyond sickle cell disease, and even rare disease, to chronic health conditions. Individuals with asthma or diabetes may also suffer hospitalizations and/or illness precluding regular attendance to class. Nevertheless, these individuals should have accommodations to support their educational attainments and completing their degrees in the expected time frame. While we acknowledge that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) allows for individuals with these chronic conditions to receive academic accommodations, it is clear that extra safeguards need to be put in place to ensure that those who require accommodations receive the accommodations they need. Further, we recommend that this bill be extended to all levels of education rather than just colleges and universities. This legislation, once revised to broaden its scope by the addition of the words "and other chronic conditions" after "sickle cell disease," should serve to increase awareness of the commonness of chronic medical conditions and the needs for institutions of higher education to accommodate students' need to encourage success. We also recommend adding the Rare Disease Advisory Council, Developmental Disabilities Council, and the Secretary's Advisory Council on Hereditary and Congenital Disorders to the Statewide Sickle Cell Steering Committee on the list of Committees tasked with ensuring appropriate and comprehensive educational materials to be developed.

Sincerely,

Ada Hamosh, MD, MPH, Chair

HB60_USM_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Andy Clark

Position: FWA

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
of MARYLAND

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
House Bill 60
Sickle Cell Disease - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns
January 27, 2026
Favorable with Amendment

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 60. The bill prohibits an institution of higher education from denying access or services to a student based on the student's diagnosis of sickle cell disease (SCD) and requires an institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with SCD.

The University System of Maryland (USM) is comprised of twelve distinguished institutions, and three regional centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the State. Each of USM's 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes three Historically Black Institutions, comprehensive institutions and research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

USM institutions are already bound by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title III (for private entities), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibit disability discrimination and require campuses to furnish reasonable accommodations and auxiliary aids so students can access programs and services. These laws all require reporting mechanisms for violations. USM institutions already operate programs, services, and outreach that align with the goals of House Bill 60 – particularly in awareness, education, care pathways, and student privacy. USM policy mirrors these obligations: the USM Board of Regents Policy VI-1.00 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and requires compliance with federal and state law, and the System Office maintains written ADA accommodation procedures underscoring confidentiality and the interactive process – policies that guide campus student affairs and disability services operations today.

Centralized disability services are the correct "front door" for students at USM institutions. Federal guidance and best practices emphasize a centralized, professional, confidential process for documentation review, the interactive process, and accommodation determinations—not ad-hoc faculty decision-making. This ensures equitable outcomes and protects student privacy. Confidentiality and limited-need-to-know sharing are core principles. The disability professionals at USM institutions recognize the need to maintain student privacy while ensuring that faculty receive only the information necessary to implement accommodations; this protects students with conditions like SCD from stigma while assuring access.

For these reasons, we recommend amendments deleting sections 18-511 and 18-512 so that institutions of higher education are not required to follow additional guidelines and prescriptions that are developed by other entities. USM institutions have independent procedures and communication mechanisms because they serve different students and have different community practices. Additional procedures not well-tuned to a campus community could actually impede effective implementation of student assistance.

The USM appreciates the opportunity to provide this information regarding House Bill 60.

HB 60 Sickle Cell Disease Outreach LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Beatrix Peck
Position: INFO

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Washington College

Letter of Information

House Appropriations Committee
HB 60 (Patterson)
Sickle Cell Disease – Institutions of Higher Education – Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns

Matt Power, President
mpower@micua.org
January 27, 2026

On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the more than 56,000 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter of information regarding ***HB 60 (Patterson) Sickle Cell Disease – Institutions of Higher Education – Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns.*** MICUA institutions maintain policies and procedures that provide reasonable accommodations to students with health conditions, including sickle cell disease, and commend this legislation's intent. Institutions of higher education are already required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as well as a myriad of federal and State laws that protect students with qualifying disabilities.

Under ADA and 504, institutions are required to publish grievance procedures outlining how a student with health conditions and disabilities qualifies for reasonable accommodations, including an individual with sickle cell disease. As such, a student with sickle cell disease who would require accommodations would be allowed modifications to absence policies and assignment deadlines, the ability to control the temperature in their residence room, food and water in classrooms, the ability to leave class discreetly, and any other reasonable accommodation based on the individual's assessment. To ease the administrative burden on our campuses, we would greatly appreciate the bill aligning directly with the ADA. We welcome a meeting with Delegate Patterson to do so.

The current process at MICUA institutions is established so that a student with a health condition would be afforded reasonable accommodations to meet the health care challenges while enrolled in school. HB 60 would create a specific policy for a single health condition and could raise concerns about excluding other specific illnesses and diseases, which are already covered under Section 504 and the ADA.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information on behalf of our institutions regarding House Bill 60. If you have any questions, please contact Irnande Altema, Vice President for Government and Business Affairs, ialtema@micua.org.