Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 1349 (Delegate Patterson, *et al.*)
Ways and Means Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Public Schools - Students With Sickle Cell Disease - Revisions

This bill extends the dates by which the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) must (1) develop guidelines for public schools regarding the administration of health care services to students with sickle cell disease and (2) provide technical assistance to schools in implementing the guidelines. The bill also extends the deadline for MSDE and MDH to report on the implementation of Chapters 385 and 386 of 2018 from December 1, 2018, to December 1, 2020. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. Extending the deadlines has no material effect on State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The date by which MSDE and MDH must (1) develop the guidelines is extended from December 1, 2018, to August 1, 2019; and (2) provide technical assistance to schools and develop a process to monitor implementation of the guidelines is extended to September 1, 2019.

Current Law/Background: Chapters 385 and 386 of 2018 required, by December 1, 2018, MSDE and MDH to (1) establish guidelines for public schools regarding the administration of heath care services to students with sickle cell disease that

include specified items; (2) provide technical assistance to schools to implement the guidelines and instruct school personnel at the local level regarding the guidelines; (3) in consultation with specified entities, establish a plan for all public school health services programs in the State to provide sickle cell disease management services for students; and (4) report on the implementation.

Guidelines

The guidelines must include:

- procedures for educating clinical and nonclinical school personnel and individuals who work with students who are participating in school-related activities about symptoms of distress related to sickle cell disease;
- protocols to ensure students with sickle cell disease receive care as determined by orders from the student's provider and the school nurse's assessment during school and school-sponsored after-school activities; and
- any other issue pertaining to the administration of health care services to students with sickle cell disease.

The purpose of the plan for all public school health services programs is to provide sickle cell disease management services through implementation of policies and programs so students with sickle cell disease can (1) remain safe in school; (2) be supported for optimal academic achievement; and (3) fully participate in all aspects of school programming, including after-school activities and other school-sponsored events.

Plans to Provide Technical Assistance to Schools

MSDE advises that the required sickle cell disease guidelines have been developed, but additional time is needed to provide the required technical assistance and monitor the implementation of the guidelines. MSDE advises that, in collaboration with MDH, it will use a variety of strategies to conduct the technical assistance to local school health services programs, which may include a statewide training event, face-to-face regional meetings, webinars, and online training opportunities with pre- and post-testing to document content mastery and appropriate learning related to knowledge/skills necessary for the management of sickle cell disease in the school setting.

Sickle Cell Anemia

Sickle cell anemia is a severe hereditary form of anemia in which a mutated form of hemoglobin distorts the red blood cells into a crescent shape at low oxygen levels. The sickle cells die early, which causes a constant shortage of red blood cells. When the cells

travel through small blood vessels, they get stuck and clog the blood flow. This can cause pain and other serious problems such as infection, acute chest syndrome, and stroke.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sickle cell anemia affects approximately 100,000 Americans. Sickle cell anemia is particularly common among those whose ancestors came from sub-Saharan Africa, and the disease occurs among about 1 of every 365 Black or African American births.

In Maryland, all newborn babies are screened for sickle cell disease. Maryland has the lowest death rate in the United States among children with sickle cell disease.

Symptoms and complications are different for each person and can range from mild to severe. Treatment options are different for each person depending on the symptoms. CDC recommends that people with sickle cell disease should drink 8 to 10 glasses of water every day and eat healthy food. They should also not get too hot, too cold, or too tired, especially during physical activity.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Health; Baltimore City Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Department of Legislative Services

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