

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2022 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 1185 (Delegate Patterson, *et al.*)  
Health and Government Operations

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**Public Health – Sickle Cell Disease – Referral for Transcranial Doppler  
Ultrasound**

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This bill requires a physician or advanced practice nurse, at least once per year, to refer each patient ages 2 to 16 with sickle cell disease (SCD) to a hematologist who specializes in SCD for a transcranial doppler ultrasound (TDU). If a physician or advanced practice nurse has documented proof that the patient received a TDU related to SCD in the preceding 12 months, the physician or advanced practice nurse may decline to refer the patient for a TDU for the remainder of the year in which the documented proof was received.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill does not directly affect governmental operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** In Maryland, all newborn babies are screened for SCD. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) advises that the Laboratories Administration, Newborn and Childhood Screening Division provides congenital and hereditary screening for approximately 58 known serious medical disorders. The screening includes sickle cell trait and disease testing and identifies newborns that are at risk for potential disorders. Information is also provided on whether additional diagnostic testing is required.

On determination of the presence of sickle cell anemia, MDH must (1) notify the physician of record or the institution where the child is born, and the parents or guardian of the infant; (2) provide the parents or guardian of the infant and the physician with educational materials; and (3) offer referral for genetic counseling. Within two months after a positive finding of sickle cell anemia, a confirmatory test must be administered, and the results must be reported to MDH.

In general, an individual must be licensed by the Maryland Board of Physicians or the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact for physicians to practice in the State. A hematologist is usually a board-certified internist or pediatrician who has completed additional years of training in hematology (the study of blood and blood disorders).

Generally, an individual must be licensed or certified by the State Board of Nursing (BON) to practice nursing in the State. In Maryland, an individual must be licensed as a registered nurse and certified as an advance practice registered nurse by BON to practice as a nurse practitioner, nurse anesthetist, nurse midwife, or clinical nurse specialist.

**Additional Comments:** 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. When the cells travel through small blood vessels, they get stuck and clog blood flow, which can cause pain, infection, acute chest syndrome, and stroke. TDU measures the speed of blood flow through the blood vessels to the brain and serves as a predictor for the risk of stroke. The American Society of Hematology guideline panel recommends annual TDU screening for children ages 2 to 16 with SCD.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** American Society of Hematology; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 3, 2022  
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Analysis by: Amberly Holcomb

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510