

**2026 SB421 NAPNAP.pdf**

Uploaded by: JD Murphy

Position: FAV



February 6th, 2026  
Maryland Senate  
Education, Energy, & The Environment Committee  
3 East Miller Senate 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 SB421 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 to its 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 they 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 **SB421 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](mailto:mdchesnapnapleg@outlook.com).

Sincerely,

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

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

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

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

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

**SB421\_Testimony\_Nikia\_Vaughan 2.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nikia Vaughan

Position: FAV

## Testimony for SB421

Good afternoon Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee.

My name is Nikia K. Vaughan, and I am the Executive Director of the Maryland Sickle Cell Disease Association. I am also the mother of two children living with chronic illnesses, including sickle cell disease. Thank you for the opportunity to share my strong support for SB421.

Last year, I had the privilege of spending time with the Invisible Warriors, a powerful group of students living with sickle cell disease at Morgan State University. Their stories were courageous, honest, and deeply concerning. One student, Mr. Morgan, shared that some professors do not allow students to make up work or excuse absences when they are hospitalized or experiencing a pain crisis. Another student described sitting in class in severe pain because they feared failing if they missed too many days. No student should have to choose between their health and their education.

As a mother, these stories stay with me. My daughter will enter high school next year, and she is an aspiring artist who served as the inaugural in-house artist at the Sickle Cell Summit as a guest of HHS Health Secretary Becerra. She dreams of attending MICA in Baltimore. As she becomes college-bound, I think about the type of community and academic environment she will need if she becomes ill. Students with chronic illnesses deserve support, compassion, and academic policies that recognize the realities of living with sickle cell disease.

SB421 strengthens that support by ensuring that students living with sickle cell disease are not penalized for managing a medical condition that is unpredictable and often severe. This bill helps protect their academic progress and their dignity. It also gives families like mine peace of mind knowing that our children can pursue their dreams without unnecessary barriers.

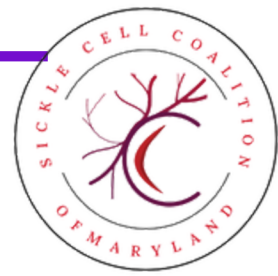
I offer this testimony not only as a parent, but as a professional who works every day to improve health and educational outcomes for individuals living with sickle cell disease. Our students deserve the same opportunities as anyone else, and SB421 moves us closer to a more equitable and compassionate Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge a favorable report for SB421.

# **HB60 -3.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:**

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](http://sicklecellcoalitionofmd.org)

## **SB 421**

Uploaded by: Ufuoma Agarin

Position: FAV



# LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
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February 10, 2026

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Chair Brian J. Feldman  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

**The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for Senate Bill 421 - Sickle Cell Disease - 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. SB 421 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.

**Senate Bill 421 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.

**Senate Bill 421 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, Senate Bill 421 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 Senate Bill 421.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland

# **SB421 RDAC Support with amendments\_fnl.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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The Honorable Brain Feldman, Chair  
The Honorable Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair  
Maryland Senate  
Education, Energy, and the Environment  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB0421  
Support, with amendments

February 6, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Rare Disease Advisory Council (RDAC) in support, with amendments, of Senate Bill 421. 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.

Council Coordinator

Best,



Ada Hamosh, Chair

# **Maryland Department of Health Rare Disease Advisory Council**

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

**SB421\_USM\_FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Andy Clark

Position: FWA



**SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**Senate Bill 421**

**Sickle Cell Disease - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns**

**February 10, 2026**

**Favorable with Amendment**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Senate Bill 421. 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 Senate Bill 421 – 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 Senate Bill 421.



**SB 421 - SWA - UMMS.pdf**

Uploaded by: Will Tilburg

Position: FWA

**Senate Bill 421 – Sickle Cell Disease - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns**

**POSITION: Support with Amendment**

February 10, 2026

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The University of Maryland Medical System (“UMMS”) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill 421 – Sickle Cell Disease - Institutions of Higher Education - Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns (“SB 421”). SB 421 proposes to require the Maryland Department of Health (“MDH”) to develop an education and awareness campaign for colleges and universities regarding students with sickle cell disease (“SCD”), and require colleges and universities to establish a process to assess, support, and treat students with SCD.

The University of Maryland Capital Region Health (“UM CRH”) is a statewide leader in sickle cell disease care through its Adult Sickle Cell Clinic. The clinic is Prince George’s County’s only dedicated adult sickle cell clinic, serving a population with one of the highest prevalences of SCD in the state, and provides a multidisciplinary program offering comprehensive services, including disease-modifying therapies, infusion services, transfusion coordination, pain management, and social support. Since opening in March 2023, the Adult Sickle Cell Clinic has achieved remarkable outcomes, including:

- 63 percent reduction in emergency department utilization for sickle cell–related care,
- 30 percent reduction in inpatient admissions compared to the prior year,
- 350 percent increase in outpatient visits, reflecting improved engagement in preventive and longitudinal care, and
- More than 300 unique patients have been served to date.

These outcomes demonstrate that specialized, coordinated outpatient care works for improving health outcomes and enabling patients to remain engaged in work, school, and community life. Educational institutions should be encouraged to connect students to these types of specialized resources.

This bill is necessary and timely. Students living with sickle cell disease face significant and often invisible barriers to academic success. SB 421 acknowledges those challenges and begins to address the long-standing stigma, misunderstanding, and lack of institutional infrastructure that too often prevent these students from thriving in higher education.

Placing students with SCD into academic systems that are not built to support their needs decreases their chances of being successful academically. The stigma associated with SCD, particularly in emergency and primary care settings, compounds these challenges and can discourage students from seeking timely care or requesting accommodation.

Intentional, structured support from institutions of higher learning will increase rates of academic achievement for students with SCD. The downstream impacts are profound: improved quality of life, better health literacy, and a greater ability to navigate the sequelae of chronic disease with confidence and insight.

While SB 421 is strong in its intent, UM CRH respectfully requests consideration of the following amendment:

Educational materials developed under the bill should explicitly direct students to specialized treatment resources for sickle cell disease, including comprehensive adult sickle cell clinics available in Maryland.

Primary care providers and emergency department physicians often lack specialized training in sickle cell disease management. As a result, students may receive inconsistent or suboptimal care, particularly during pain crises. Ensuring that educational materials point students — and campus health professionals — to expert SCD treatment centers will improve care coordination, reduce unnecessary emergency department utilization, and support student stability and academic continuity.

If the legislation is successful, and MDH moves forward with convening stakeholders, UM CRH recommends that the department will take into account how sickle cell disease affects each individual differently, and that as a result institutional supports must be comprehensive, flexible, and student-centered. Policies developed pursuant to SB 421 should contemplate a broad spectrum of support, including:

- Alternative learning methods such as virtual or hybrid instruction during illness,
- Flexible academic schedules or year-round curricula,
- Individualized academic plans, including 504 Plans or IEP-like accommodations at the postsecondary level,
- Clear procedures for medical leave and re-entry without academic penalty, and
- Faculty and staff education to reduce stigma and improve understanding of chronic illness.

For these reasons, the University of Maryland Medical System supports SB 421 with a proposed amendment, and respectfully requests a *favorable* report on the bill.

For more information, please contact:

Will Tilburg  
Vice President, Government and Regulatory Affairs  
University of Maryland Medical System  
[William.Tilburg@umm.edu](mailto:William.Tilburg@umm.edu)

**MICUA SB 421 Sickle-Cell Disease Outreach LOI.pdf**

Uploaded by: Beatrix Peck

Position: INFO



## Letter of Information

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**  
***SB 421 (Washington)***  
***Sickle Cell Disease – Institutions of Higher Education – Policies, Procedures, and Educational Campaigns***

**Matt Power, President**  
[mpower@micua.org](mailto:mpower@micua.org)  
**February 10, 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 [SB 421 \(Washington\) 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. SB 421 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 Senate Bill 421. If you have any questions, please contact Irnande Altema, Vice President for Government and Business Affairs, [ialtema@micua.org](mailto:ialtema@micua.org).