



February 6, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Chronic Disease Coalition, a national nonprofit organization representing the millions of Americans who manage chronic conditions, we write to express our strong support for HB 178 and HB 60. These two bills represent practical, patient-centered steps to improve outcomes for individuals living with sickle cell disease in Maryland.

The **Sickle Cell Disease Awareness in Higher Education (HB 60)** bill recognizes a gap that patients and families consistently identify: lack of understanding in educational settings can create unnecessary barriers to academic success. Higher education is an essential path for many who are trying to build productive, independent lives. Education materials for colleges and universities will help ensure that students with sickle cell disease are better supported, informed about available accommodations, and able to fully participate in campus life.

The **Sickle Cell Disease Expansion Program (HB 178)** addresses another critical issue raised by patients nationwide: limited access to consistent, specialized adult care. To reduce dependence on high-cost emergency department visits, patients need more access to care. Expanding outpatient sickle cell services through a statewide clinic network and will ED utilization and improve health outcomes.

Together, these bills demonstrate a balanced approach to improving access, advancing health equity, and making smart investments that benefit both patients and the broader healthcare system. We appreciate Maryland's leadership in addressing the needs of people living with sickle cell disease and respectfully urge your support for both measures.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to patient-centered healthcare policy.

Sincerely,

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