



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
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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.