

## Educational Column - 1 Educational Column

### Title:

Playing and Practice Seasons and Recruiting -- Mandatory Medical Examination -- Sickle Cell Solubility Test -- Documented Results of Prior Test and Option to Decline and Sign Written Release (I)

### Item Ref: 1

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### Educational Column:

This document contains questions and answers to assist the NCAA Division I membership in its understanding and application of NCAA Division I Proposal No. 2009-75-B (as amended by Proposal No. 2009-75-B-1).

**1. Question:** Does NCAA Division I legislation require sickle cell trait testing?

**Answer:** In Division I, legislation has been adopted that requires institutions, as part of the medical examination required before athletics participation, to include a sickle cell solubility test, unless documented results of a prior test are provided to the institution or the student-athlete declines the test and signs a written release. This legislation is effective as of August 1, 2010 and is applicable to student-athletes who are beginning their initial year of eligibility and student-athletes trying out for a team, including transfers. Returning student-athletes are not required to be given the test.

**2. Question:** Are institutions required to administer the sickle cell solubility test to transfer student-athletes prior to any athletics participation?

**Answer:** Yes, unless documented results of a prior test are provided to the institution or the transfer student-athlete declines the test and signs a written release.

**3. Question:** Are institutions required to administer the sickle cell solubility test to male students who practice with women's teams?

**Answer:** Yes, unless documented results of a prior test are provided to the institution or the student declines the test and signs a written release.

**4. Question:** Does the sickle cell solubility test have to be conducted within the same six month window of the medical examination.

**Answer:** Yes. An institution is required to include the sickle cell solubility test as part of the mandatory medical examination, which must be administered within six months prior to any athletics participation. In the event that the student-athlete was previously tested for the sickle cell trait, the documented results of that test must be provided to the institution within six months prior to athletics participation. Once the institution receives that documentation, the institution is not required to include the sickle cell solubility test as part of the mandatory medical examination for that student-athlete.

**5. Question:** May an institution conduct the sickle cell solubility test as part of a medical examination during a prospective student-athlete's visit to campus to attend general orientation sessions conducted for all prospective students?

**Answer:** Yes.

**6. Question:** May an institution mandate that all student-athletes sign a written release without offering the test?

**Answer:** No. The intent of the adopted proposal is that student-athletes are first offered the test and if they decline due to personal circumstances, knowing the risks associated with sickle cell trait, then a signed written release is required. The written release provision should not be used by an institution to avoid the mandatory obligation to ensure the health, safety and well-being of student-athletes through testing for the sickle cell trait.

**7. Question:** Will the NCAA provide a standard template document to member institutions for the written release provision of this legislation?

**Answer:** No. Each institution should discuss with its legal counsel the need for developing an institution-specific written release form.

**8. Question:** If a student-athlete declines the sickle cell solubility test and signs the written release, does the written release require other individuals to sign it as well (e.g., parent, legal guardian)?

**Answer:** The signature of the parent or legal guardian of the prospective student-athlete is required if he or she is a minor. If the prospective student-athlete is not a minor, then it would be left to each institution to determine if additional signatures are required.

**9. Question:** Is the legislation mandated for all student-athletes or only those classified as "at-risk"?

**Answer:** The legislation is applicable to all student-athletes and not just those student-athletes classified as "at-risk". Universal screening is required at birth, yet many student-athletes do not know their status.

**10. Question:** Are the results of the sickle cell solubility test required to be available before a prospective student-athlete or student-athlete is permitted to participate in athletically related activities?

**Answer:** Yes.

**11. Question:** Does the sickle cell trait change in adulthood? In other words, is it possible that someone who tests positive for the trait as an infant would no longer have the trait in adulthood?

**Answer:** No.

**12. Question:** Is the sickle cell trait race or ethnicity specific?

**Answer:** No. While it is true that sickle cell trait is more common in the African-American population at an eight percent carrier rate, in today's homogeneous society, anyone could be a carrier. The sickle gene is a condition of inheritance rather than race or ethnicity.

**13. Question:** What are the next steps/best practices if a student-athlete tests positive for sickle cell trait?

**Answer:** If a test confirms the sickle cell trait, the student-athlete should be offered counseling on the implications of sickle cell trait, including health, athletics participation and family planning. Knowledge of sickle cell trait status can be a gateway to education and simple precautions should be taken to minimize health issues among student-athletes with the sickle cell trait.

**14. Question:** Does the NCAA have educational materials for student-athletes and staff members to learn more about sickle cell trait?

**Answer:** Yes. Fact sheets and an educational video are available for student-athletes, coaches and athletics personnel at [www.NCAA.org/health-safety](http://www.NCAA.org/health-safety).

**15. Question:** Who should view the sickle cell trait video?

**Answer:** At a minimum, it is recommended for student-athletes with positive test results, student-athletes who decline the test and sign a written release and all athletics staff members involved with conducting or monitoring physical activities.

**16. Question:** Are sickle cell trait/disease foundations available to help find screening solutions for student-athletes?

**Answer:** A list of state organizations can be found at [www.NCAA.org/health-safety](http://www.NCAA.org/health-safety).

**17. Question:** Is a question on the history form of the medical examination sufficient to determine a student-athlete's sickle cell trait status?

**Answer:** No. Documented results of a prior test must be provided to the institution in order to meet the legislation.

**18. Question:** How should an institution keep track of the student-athlete's sickle cell trait status or written release status?

**Answer:** The method of maintaining medical record documentation is an institutional decision. At a minimum, athletics medical staff should have a copy in the student-athlete's medical file.

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## References

Legislative References			Other
Div.	Number	Title	References Educational Columns: 0
I	13.11.3.9.1	Mandatory Medical Examination.	Educational Columns: 0
I	13.11.3.10.1	Mandatory Medical Examination.	Proposals: 2
I	13.11.3.11.1	Mandatory Medical Examination.	
I	17.1.5	Mandatory Medical Examination.	