

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Health Policy

BILL: SB 844

INTRODUCER: Senator Jones

SUBJECT: Sickle Cell Disease Care Management and Treatment Continuing Education

DATE: January 30, 2026 REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Looke	Brown	HP	<b>Favorable</b>
2.		AHS	
3.		FP	

## I. Summary:

SB 844 creates s. 456.0311, F.S., to require allopathic and osteopathic physicians and nurses licensed under part I of ch. 464, F.S.,<sup>1</sup> to complete a two-hour continuing education (CE) course, approved by the applicable board, on sickle cell disease (SCD) care management.

The bill specifies what must be included in the course and requires each license or certificate holder to submit confirmation of have completed such a course to their applicable board. The bill allows applicable boards to approve additional equivalent courses that may be used to satisfy the CE requirement and to include the required hours in any total continuing education required for the practitioner, so long as the practitioner is not required to take less than 30 hours of CE. Failure to comply with the CE requirement constitutes grounds for disciplinary action. The bill grants each applicable board authority to adopt rules to implement these provisions.

Additionally, the bill adds the treatment of pain for patients with sickle cell disease to what must be included for CE courses for persons registered to prescribe controlled substances.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026.

## II. Present Situation:

### Sickle Cell Disease

SCD affects approximately 100,000 Americans and is the most prevalent inherited blood disorder in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> SCD affects mostly, but not exclusively, persons of African ancestry. SCD

<sup>1</sup> Part I of ch. 464, F.S., is the Nurse Practice Act and governs the licensure and certification of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and advanced practice registered nurses.

<sup>2</sup> National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, *What is Sickle Cell Disease?*, available at <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/sickle-cell-disease> (last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

is a group of inherited disorders in which abnormal hemoglobin cause red blood cells to buckle into a sickle shape. The deformed red blood cells damage blood vessels and, over time, contribute to a cascade of negative health effects beginning in infancy, such as intense vaso-occlusive pain episodes, strokes, organ failure, and recurrent infections.<sup>3,4</sup> The severity of complications generally worsens with age, but treatment and prevention strategies can mitigate complications and lengthen the lives of those suffering from SCD.<sup>5</sup>

A person who carries a single gene for SCD has the sickle cell trait. Individuals with the sickle cell trait do not have SCD, and under normal conditions, they are generally asymptomatic. However, they are carriers of SCD and have an increased likelihood of having a child with SCD.

## Continuing Education

Physicians licensed under chs. 458 and 459, F.S., and practitioners licensed or certified under part I of ch. 464, F.S., are required to complete varying amounts of continuing education to maintain their licensure or certification.

- CE requirements for specified professions include:
  - Section 456.013(6), F.S., requires physicians licensed under chs. 458 and 459, F.S., to complete a minimum of 40 hours of CE every two years and allows the boards to require that up to one hour be in the area of risk management or cost containment.
  - Sections 458.347 and 459.022, F.S., require physician assistants (PA) to complete a minimum of 10 hours of CE. Three of the 10 hours must consist of a course on the safe and effective prescribing of controlled substances.
  - Part I of ch. 464, F.S., requires registered nurses (RN), licensed practical nurses (LPN), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) to take up to 30 hours of CE as a condition of licensure or certificate renewal unless they are certified and certain accredited health care specialty programs. As part of their CE and regardless of being exempt from CE requirements due to certification:
    - APRNs are required to take a three hour course on the safe and effective prescribing of controlled substances; and
    - All nurses licensed or certified under part I of ch. 464, F.S., are required to take a two hour CE on human trafficking.
- General CE requirements for health care practitioners include:
  - Section 456.013(7), F.S., requires all practitioners licensed or certified by the Department of Health (DOH) to complete a two hour course relating to the prevention of medical errors every two years which count toward the total number of CE hours required for the practitioner's profession.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *About Sickle Cell Disease*, available at [About Sickle Cell Disease | Sickle Cell Disease \(SCD\) | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/sickle-cell/about-sickle-cell-disease.html) (last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

<sup>4</sup> Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, *Florida Medicaid Study of Enrollees with Sickle Cell Disease* (2023), available at [https://ahca.myflorida.com/content/download/20771/file/Florida\\_Medicaid\\_Study\\_of\\_Enrollees\\_with\\_Sickle\\_Cell\\_Disease.pdf](https://ahca.myflorida.com/content/download/20771/file/Florida_Medicaid_Study_of_Enrollees_with_Sickle_Cell_Disease.pdf) (last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Complications of Sickle Cell Disease*, available at [Complications of Sickle Cell Disease | Sickle Cell Disease \(SCD\) | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/sickle-cell/complications-sickle-cell-disease.html) (last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

- Section 456.0301, F.S., requires each person registered with the United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and authorized to prescribe controlled substances to complete a two hour CE course on prescribing controlled substances.
- Sections 456.031, 456.033, and 456.0341, F.S., require persons licensed under multiple chapters of law, including physicians and nurses, to take CE courses on domestic violence, HIV<sup>6</sup> and AIDS,<sup>7</sup> and human trafficking.

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

**Section 1** amends s. 456.3031, F.S., to require that the two-hour CE for practitioners registered with the DEA and authorized to prescribe controlled substances include information on the treatment of pain for patients with SCD.

**Section 2** creates s. 456.0311, F.S., to require physicians, PAs, RNs, LPNs, and APRNs, to complete one two-hour, board-approved CE course on SCD care management as part of the first licensure or certification renewal. The course is required to consist of education specific to SCD and sickle cell traits, including, but not limited to, evidence-based treatment protocols for patients of all ages, continuing patient and family education, periodic comprehensive evaluations and other disease-specific health maintenance services, psychosocial care, genetic counseling, and pain management. Each licensee or certificate holder is required to submit confirmation of having completed such course on a form provided by the applicable board when submitting fees for the first renewal.

In addition to the board-approved course, each applicable board may approve additional equivalent courses that may be used to satisfy the CE requirement. Also, each licensing board may include the hours required for completion of the CE in the total hours of continuing education required by law for such profession unless the CE requirements for such profession consist of fewer than 30 hours biennially. If a person holds two or more licenses subject to taking the CE course, completing the course once is sufficient for their CE requirement for all of their licenses.

The bill specifies that failure to comply with the CE requirements is grounds for disciplinary action under each respective practice act and under s. 456.072(1)(k), F.S., and, in addition to any discipline, the licensee must be required to complete the required course.

The bill grants rulemaking authority to each applicable board to implement the new requirements.

**Section 3** provides an effective date of July 1, 2026.

### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

#### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

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<sup>6</sup> Human immunodeficiency virus.

<sup>7</sup> Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

**D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

**E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

SB 844 may have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on practitioners if they are required to pay to take the additional CE course.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 456.0301 of the Florida Statutes.

This bill creates section 456.0311 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:**

**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

**B. Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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