

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 Fiscal Policy

BILL: CS/SB 844

INTRODUCER: Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services and Senator Jones

SUBJECT: Sickle Cell Disease Care Management and Treatment Continuing Education

DATE: February 17, 2026 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Looke</u>	<u>Brown</u>	<u>HP</u>	Favorable
2.	<u>Gerbrandt</u>	<u>McKnight</u>	<u>AHS</u>	Fav/CS
3.	<u>Looke</u>	<u>Siples</u>	<u>FP</u>	Pre-meeting

I. Summary:

CS/SB 844 amends s. 456.0301, F.S., to require that the standard continuing education (CE) course on prescribing controlled substances must include information regarding the treatment of pain for patients with sickle cell disease.

The bill has no fiscal impact on state expenditures or revenues. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)

SCD affects approximately 100,000 Americans and is the most prevalent inherited blood disorder in the U.S.¹ SCD affects mostly, but not exclusively, persons of African ancestry. SCD is a group of inherited disorders in which abnormal hemoglobin causes 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.^{2,3} The severity of

¹ 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).

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *About Sickle Cell Disease*, available at [About Sickle Cell Disease | Sickle Cell Disease \(SCD\) | CDC](#) (last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

³ 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 (last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

complications generally worsens with age, but treatment and prevention strategies can mitigate complications and lengthen the lives of those suffering from SCD.⁴

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.
 - 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, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and human trafficking.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Complications of Sickle Cell Disease*, available at [Complications of Sickle Cell Disease | Sickle Cell Disease \(SCD\) | CDC](#) (last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 456.0301, F.S., to require that the two-hour continuing education (CE) for practitioners registered with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and authorized to prescribe controlled substances include information on the treatment of pain for patients with sickle cell disease (SCD).

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

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:

The bill may have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on practitioners if they are required to cover the cost of the additional continuing education course required under the bill.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill has no fiscal impact on state expenditures or revenues.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 456.0301 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.)

CS by Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services on February 12, 2026:

The committee substitute removes the changes to s. 456.0311, F.S., of the underlying bill, which required certain physicians and nurses to complete a training course on sickle cell disease management.

B. Amendments:

None.