

Newborn Screening Results as Proof of Sickle Cell Trait Status

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Purpose

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) requires all student athletes participating in Division I, II, and III Collegiate/University athletics to provide their College/University with documented results from a sickle cell solubility test.

The purpose of providing sickle cell solubility test results to the student athlete's College/University is to provide more individualized medical monitoring and care to student athlete's participating in Collegiate/University athletics.

Until recently, the NCAA accepted a student athlete's newborn screening results, which includes testing for sickle cell disease and other hemoglobinopathies, as documentation of a student athlete's sickle cell trait status.

Recently, the NCAA [clarified](#) that "only results from a sickle cell solubility test satisfy the requirements of NCAA legislation" for documentation of sickle cell trait status. There are no other screening types other than a sickle cell solubility test that meet the [NCAA's requirements](#).

Vermont's newborn screening test is not a sickle cell solubility test. The newborn screening test relies on a dried bloodspot collected at birth and uses isoelectric focusing (IEF) and high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) to test for sickle cell and other hemoglobinopathies. A sickle cell solubility test must be conducted on whole venous blood and uses a different laboratory method to confirm the presence of hemoglobin S.

Definitions

Sickle Cell Solubility Test. A qualitative assay performed using an individual sample of whole blood to detect the presence of hemoglobin S.

Newborn Screening Test. A screening test performed using an individual dried bloodspot for the purpose of screening newborns for certain serious disorders not readily apparent

at birth and which require early diagnosis and treatment. [Newborn Screening Program Rule](#).

Policy

Vermont's newborn screening test does not include sickle cell solubility testing. Thus, Vermont's newborn screening test [does not meet the NCAA's criteria](#) for proof of sickle cell trait status and the NCAA will not accept the screening test as proof.

A student athlete that needs a sickle cell solubility test will need to discuss this with their healthcare provider and the athletic director or staff of their College/University. Vermont's Newborn Screening Program does not perform or conduct sickle cell solubility testing.

In compliance with the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) the Vermont Newborn Screening Program will continue to fulfill requests for newborn screening reports from individuals and/or their healthcare providers. However, the Program wants to make sure student athletes understand that the screening test the Department can provide will not be sufficient to fulfill the NCAA's requirements.

Additional Information

Questions about this policy may be directed to the Newborn Screening Program Manager at 1-802-951-5180 or AHS.VDHNewbornscreening@vermont.gov

[Newborn Screening Program Rule](#)

[NCA Sickle Cell Solubility Q&A, February 2025](#)

[NCAA Medical Handbook](#)

[NCAA Health and Safety](#)

Revision History

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