



Dear Student Athlete and Parent,

On June 25, 2009 the NCAA issued a new recommendation that athletic departments confirm sickle cell trait status in all student athletes.

Sickle cell trait describes the way a person can inherit one of the genes of sickle cell disease, but not develop recurrent symptoms. Sickle cell trait is generally regarded as a benign condition. However, individuals with sickle cell trait may have rare complications, including fatal exertional heat illness with exercise and/or sudden idiopathic death with exercise. In rare cases, exercise-induced dehydration or exhaustion can cause healthy red blood cells to turn sickle-shaped, which can cause death during sporting activities. As such, athletes with sickle cell trait and the athletic staff must be aware of the athlete's sickle cell status and the risks associated with sickle cell trait.

Sickle cell disease affects millions of people throughout the world and is particularly common among people whose ancestors come from sub-Saharan Africa, Spanish-speaking regions in the Western Hemisphere (South America, Cuba, and Central America), Saudi Arabia, India, and Mediterranean countries such as Turkey, Greece, and Italy. Because of this, hospitals in the United States screen *all* newborn babies for sickle cell disease. However, some student athletes may not know if they have the trait. Therefore, following recommendations from the National Athletic Trainers Association and the College of American Pathologists, the NCAA recommends Sickle Cell Trait screening if the student athlete's status is unknown.

As a member of the NCAA, Muhlenberg College supports this NCAA recommendation. Therefore, Muhlenberg College student athletes are required to inform Muhlenberg College Athletic Training Office and Health Services of their Sickle Cell Trait status. If the student athlete does not know his/her Sickle Cell Trait status, then the athlete must have confirmatory testing done by his/her primary care provider. This information on Sickle Cell Trait status is required to be submitted before the pre-participation exam at the start of the season. Student athletes will not be permitted to participate in their sports without this information on file.

Please complete the attached form and return to the Muhlenberg College Athletic Training office. You can also fax this form to 484-664-3537. Please call the Muhlenberg College Athletic Training Office (484-664-3391) with any questions.

Sincerely,

Steve Nemes
Head Athletic Trainer

Brynnmarie Dorsey
Director, Health Services



Sickle Cell Trait Status Form

Student Name: _____ Class Year: _____

Sport(s): _____

Do you have sickle cell trait? Yes* No I don't know**

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Name _____
(If Student Athlete is under 18 years old)

Parent Signature _____ Date _____
(If Student Athlete is under 18 years old)

*****If you are unsure if you have sickle cell trait, please consult with your primary care physician for confirmatory testing and have your physician document your Sickle Cell Trait status.***

Please return completed form (with confirmatory testing if status is unknown and letter of clearance if Sickle Cell Trait positive) to Muhlenberg College, Athletic Training Office, 2400 Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18104