



Sunset Report
**Alabama Sickle
Cell Oversight and
Regulatory Commission**
Montgomery, Alabama

October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2024

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
EXAMINERS of Public Accounts

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August 20, 2025

Sunset Committee
Alabama State House
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Committee Members:

This report was prepared to provide information for use by the Sunset Committee in conducting its review and evaluation of the operations of the Alabama Sickle Cell Oversight and Regulatory Commission in accordance with the ***Code of Alabama 1975***, Section 41-20-9.

The report contains unaudited information obtained from the management, staff, and records of the Alabama Sickle Cell Oversight and Regulatory Commission in addition to information obtained from other sources.

Please contact me if you have any questions concerning this report.

Sincerely,

Rachel Laurie Riddle
Chief Examiner

Examiner
Kierra Burston

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PROFILE

Purpose/Authority

The Alabama Sickle Cell Oversight and Regulatory Commission (the “Commission”) was created by Act Number 1996-727, Acts of Alabama, to ensure the delivery of sickle cell services to all affected persons in the state of Alabama. The Commission assists in establishing geographic service delivery boundaries. The Commission provides funding for two different types of entities, centers and chapters. Centers are affiliated with either hospitals or universities and are oriented more towards research on sickle cell disease. Chapters (often called foundations) are community-based organizations which provide support services to those who may be faced with this condition. The Commission operates under the authority of the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 22-10B-1 through 22-10B-7.

<u>Characteristics</u>	
Members and Selection	<p>Twelve members are appointed to the Commission as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two members appointed by the Governor.• One member appointed by the University of South Alabama Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center.• One member appointed by the University of Alabama-Birmingham.• One member appointed by the Children's Hospital of Birmingham.• One member from each of the seven chapters of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America-Alabama Chapter, Incorporated.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ North Alabama Sickle Cell Foundation, Inc.◆ Sickle Cell Disease Association of America – Central Alabama Chapter◆ Sickle Cell Disease Association of America – West Alabama Chapter◆ Sickle Cell Disease Association of America – Mobile Chapter, Inc.◆ Sickle Cell Foundation of Greater Montgomery◆ Southeast Alabama Sickle Cell Association, Inc.◆ The Tri-County Sickle Cell Association (Not in existence at the time of this report). <p>Currently there are thirteen members serving. Appointees are subject to Senate confirmation.</p> <p><i>Code of Alabama 1975</i>, Section 22-10B-2</p>

Term	Members serve four-year terms. <i>Code of Alabama 1975</i> , Section 22-10B-2
Qualifications	Members shall be citizens of Alabama. <i>Code of Alabama 1975</i> , Section 22-10B-2
Consumer Representation	No specific statutory requirement.
Racial Representation	No specific statutory requirement. Twelve minority members are currently serving.
Geographical Representation	No specific statutory requirement.
Other Representation	The membership of the Commission shall be inclusive and reflect the racial, gender, geographic, urban/rural, and economic diversity of the state. <i>Code of Alabama 1975</i> , Section 22-10B-2
Compensation	Members of the Commission receive no salary but may be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenditures incurred in the performance of their official duties the same as state employees. <i>Code of Alabama 1975</i> , Section 22-10B-2
Attended Board Member Training	Ten current Commission Members One former Commission Member Two Staff Members

<u>Operations</u>	
Administrator	The Commission has an administrative services contract with Smith Warren Management Services, Inc. Keith Warren, President of Smith Warren Management Services, Inc., serves as the Commission's Executive Director. The current annual contract amount is \$2,000.00 per month (\$24,000 annually) and expires on January 22, 2026.
Location	2740 Zelda Road Third Floor Montgomery, AL 36104 Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm.
Real Property Ownership	The Commission does not own any real property.
Employees	None.
Legal Counsel	Sara D. Rogan, Assistant Attorney General, with the Attorney General's Office is assigned to provide legal counsel.
Subpoena Power	The Commission does not have subpoena power except as provided by the Administrative Procedures Act, <i>Code of Alabama 1975</i> , Section 41-22-12 for hearings and contested cases.
Internet Presence	https://sicklecell.alabama.gov/ The website contains the Commission's current statutes, rules, members, staff, a listing of centers and chapters, resources, news and events, contact information, and the minutes of the Commission's meetings.

<u>Financial</u>	
Source of Funds	Appropriations from the Alabama Education Trust Fund
State Treasury	Yes, Education Trust Fund 0200.
Required Distributions	<p>Annual appropriation Acts for the state's Education Trust Fund included the following:</p> <p>For fiscal year 2021, Act 2020-169 stipulated that \$25,973.00 was be used to fund travel and other expenses of the Commission and \$1,428,728.00 used to fund programs.</p> <p>For fiscal year 2022, Act 2021-342 stipulated that \$25,973.00 was to be used to fund travel and other expenses of the Commission and \$1,620,640.00 used to fund programs.</p> <p>For fiscal year 2023, Act 2022-393 stipulated that \$60,973.00 was to be used to fund travel and other expenses of the Commission and \$1,620,640.00 used to programs.</p> <p>For fiscal year 2024, Act 2023-379 stipulated that \$60,973.00 was to be used to fund travel and other expenses of the Commission and \$1,620,640.00 used to fund programs.</p> <p>Each of the Acts noted above included that funds are to be used to fund university and community-based Sickle Cell programs which were funded from the Education Trust Fund budget in fiscal year 2000 and funds shall be distributed proportionately to the distribution made in fiscal year 2003.</p>
Unused Funds	Unused funds are reverted to the Education Trust Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Significant Issue 2025-001: The Commission allowed its administrative services contract with Smith Warren Management Services, Inc. to lapse on September 30, 2024. This lapse required the Commission to enter an emergency contract for continued administrative services.

On October 8, 2024, the Department of Finance’s Chief Procurement Officer (the “CPO”) granted permission for the Commission to execute an emergency contract effective October 2, 2024, to allow time for the Request for Proposal (“RFP”) process to be completed and awarded. Thereafter, the Commission and Smith Warren Management Services, Inc. executed an emergency contract on October 9, 2024, to provide administrative, management, and facility services through January 31, 2025, at a cost of \$2,000.00 per month. However, the emergency contract was not executed by the CPO until October 31, 2024.

The Commission completed the RFP process and presented a contract to the Contract Review Permanent Legislative Oversight Committee at the January 5, 2025 meeting. The contract was approved and subsequently signed by the Governor on January 23, 2025, for a period of one year, with no more than two one-year renewal periods.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

Significant Issue 2025-002: Three out of five (60%) Commission members responding to our survey expressed the following:

- Members had concerns about the continuity of care, consistency of follow-up, and information released by community-based organizations.
- Members indicated the Commission does not receive regular reports of its operations from the Executive Director.

STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS/SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

All prior findings/significant issues have been resolved, except for the following:

Prior Finding 2012-01: In the four previous examinations, we disclosed information on Commission members required by law to be posted to the Secretary of State's website was not accurate, complete, or current. The site included the names of three commissioners whose terms had expired and whose successors had been appointed. The names of two deceased commissioners remained on the website. The expiration dates for the terms of reappointed Commission members were not shown. One commissioner's term expired October 31, 2012. The vacancy was not reported to the Secretary of State, as required by law.

At the time of this finding, the ***Code of Alabama 1975***, Section 36-14-17(b) provided that, "By December 4, 2006, the chair of an existing board or the appointing authority for the members of a newly created board, shall provide the Secretary of State, in electronic format prepared and distributed by the Secretary of State, the following data pertaining to the board: 1. The name of the board, its mailing address, telephone number, and E-mail address. 2. The name of each appointee to the board. 3. The date of appointment, term of appointment, and expiration date of the term of appointment of each appointee. 4. The name and position of the appointing authority of each appointee.

The ***Code of Alabama 1975***, Section 36-14-17(c)(1) states, "The chair of an existing board shall notify the Secretary of State by electronic means of a vacancy as follows: For a vacancy scheduled to occur on the board as a result of the expiration of a term, at least 45 days before the vacancy occurs."

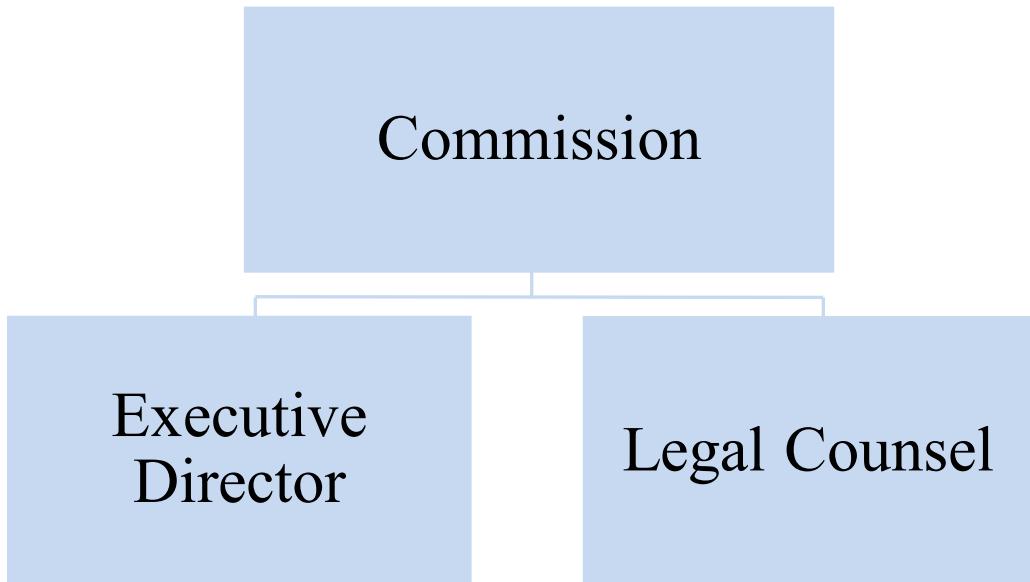
Current Status: Partially Resolved. The Commission did not notify the Secretary of State at least forty-five days prior to the expiration of seven Commission members' terms that expired on March 14, 2022, and three Commission members' terms that expired on January 22, 2022. As a result, this could have caused potential candidates for vacancies not to receive sufficient notice and caused the Commission not to receive input from all interested candidates to fill the vacancies.

STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS/SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

Prior Significant Issue 2017-002: Four of the nine Commission members responding to our questionnaire stated that the Commission is not adequately funded. The appropriations from the Education Trust Fund are not sufficient to address the medical and social service needs of patients and their families and pay commission members' travel expenses to attend meetings. According to the executive director, local chapters have difficulty finding people to serve as commission members due to the agency's inability to pay travel expenses for members. Two of the eleven commission members responding to the current questionnaire stated that the Commission is not adequately funded.

Current Status: Unresolved. Four of the five (80%) Commission members responding to our survey do not believe the Commission is adequately funded.

ORGANIZATION



PERSONNEL

The Commission does not employ personnel. The Commission contracts with Smith Warren Management Services, Inc. for administrative services. Keith Warren, President of Smith Warren Management Services, Inc., serves as the Commission's Executive Director. The current contract compensates Smith Warren Management Services, Inc. \$24,000 annually to be paid in monthly installments of \$2,000.00. The current contract is for twelve months beginning January 23, 2025, and will expire January 22, 2026.

Legal Counsel

Assistant Attorney General Sara D. Rogan, an employee of the Attorney General's Office, serves as the Commission's legal counsel.

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

The following amounts were disbursed to the Alabama Sickle Cell Chapters and Centers by the Commission for fiscal years 2021-2024:

Schedule of Amounts Disbursed to Sickle Cell Programs

Chapter	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
North Alabama Sickle Cell Foundation	\$152,159.52	\$172,598.16	\$158,214.98	\$186,981.34
Sickle Cell Disease Association of America Central Alabama Chapter	231,596.76	262,705.68	240,813.54	284,597.82
West Alabama Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation	62,863.92	71,308.08	65,365.74	77,250.42
Sickle Cell Disease Association of America Mobile Chapter	216,023.64	245,040.72	224,620.66	265,460.78
Sickle Cell Foundation of Greater Montgomery*	185,503.08	225,539.64	197,901.33	233,883.39
Southeast Alabama Sickle Cell Association*	192,811.71	230,050.26	204,246.90	241,382.70
Children of Alabama – Pediatric Sickle Cell Clinic	49,862.52	56,560.32	51,846.96	61,273.68
University of Alabama Birmingham Adult Sickle Cell Clinic	119,870.16	135,971.64	124,640.67	147,302.61
Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center University of South Alabama	209,594.28	237,747.84	217,935.52	257,560.16
Total	\$1,420,285.59	\$1,637,522.34	\$1,485,586.30	\$1,755,692.90

*Includes amounts for the inactive Tri-County Chapter – Selma

Notification of Commission Decisions to Amend Administrative Rules

The Commission complied with notification procedures prescribed in the Administrative Procedure Act, which includes publication of proposed rules in the Administrative Monthly and public hearings on proposed rules.

COMPLAINT HANDLING

The ***Code of Alabama 1975***, Section 22-10B-3 requires the Commission to promulgate rules pursuant to the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act for handling complaints regarding service and management of statewide programs and addressing any other discrepancies brought to the attention of the Commission. ***Administrative Rule*** 825-X-2-04 provides procedures for receipt, documentation, and investigation of complaints received by the Commission.

Initial Contact/Documentation	Complainants shall follow the complainee's established complaint procedures. Complaints must be submitted within 90 days of the alleged occurrence. Complaints may be written and signed or videoed. If the complainant is not satisfied with the complainee's final decision or does not have established complaint procedures, the complainant can file a complaint with the Commission within thirty days of the complainee's final decision.
Anonymous Complaints Accepted	No.
Investigative Process/Probable Cause Determination	<p>After verification that the complaint has been presented to the Complainee and action was taken, the Executive Director of the Commission shall perform a preliminary review to determine if there is merit and sufficient evidence to warrant formal proceedings.</p> <p>If the Executive Director and the Commission's legal counsel determine that the complaint may be meritorious and that sufficient evidence exists to warrant proceedings, the complaint will be given to the investigative committee for further action. The investigative committee shall consist of one Commission member, legal counsel, and the Executive Director.</p> <p>If further investigation is warranted, an investigator may be retained. The investigator shall work under the direction of the Executive Director to conduct further investigation.</p>
Negotiated Settlements	Yes
Notification of Resolution to the Complainant	The Executive Director shall notify the Complainant and the Complainee that the investigation has been closed.

The Commission did not receive any complaints during this Sunset review period.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Source of Funds

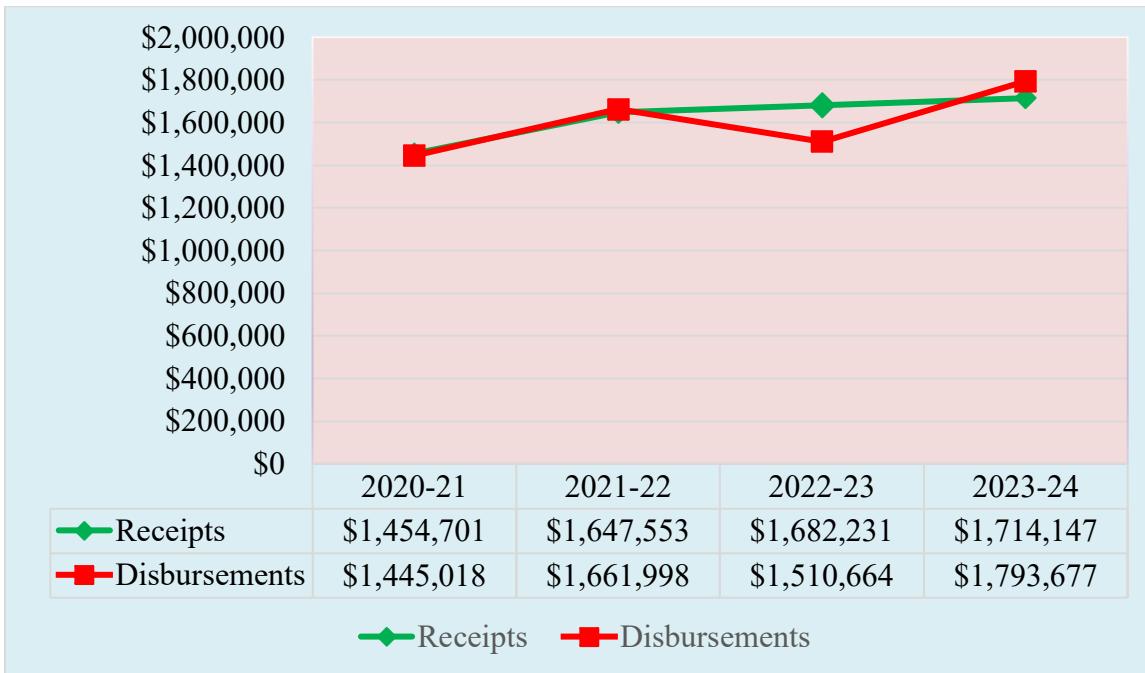
The Commission receives funding through appropriations made from the State's Education Trust Fund.

Schedule of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances

October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2024

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
<u>Receipts</u>				
Education Trust Fund	<u>\$1,454,701.00</u>	<u>\$1,647,553.00</u>	<u>\$1,682,231.00</u>	<u>\$1,714,147.00</u>
<u>Disbursements</u>				
Travel, In-State			2,135.73	2,555.20
Utilities & Communication			24.26	65.78
Professional Services	24,732.38	24,476.03	22,836.80	35,155.80
Supplies, Materials, & Operating Expenses			80.50	207.45
Grants & Benefits	1,420,285.59	1,637,522.34	1,485,586.30	1,755,692.90
Education Trust Fund Reversions	1,505.03	919.88	34,348.88	53,382.50
Total	<u>1,446,523.00</u>	<u>1,662,918.25</u>	<u>1,545,012.47</u>	<u>1,847,059.63</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Receipts over Disbursements	8,178.00	(15,365.25)	137,218.53	(132,912.63)
Cash Balance at Beginning of Year	<u>9,042.00</u>	<u>17,220.00</u>	<u>1,854.75</u>	<u>139,073.28</u>
Cash Balance at End of Year	17,220.00	1,854.75	139,073.28	6,160.65
Reserved for Year-End Obligations	(17,220.00)	(1,854.75)	(139,073.28)	(6,160.65)
Unobligated Cash Balance at End of Year	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>

Operating Receipts vs. Operating Disbursements



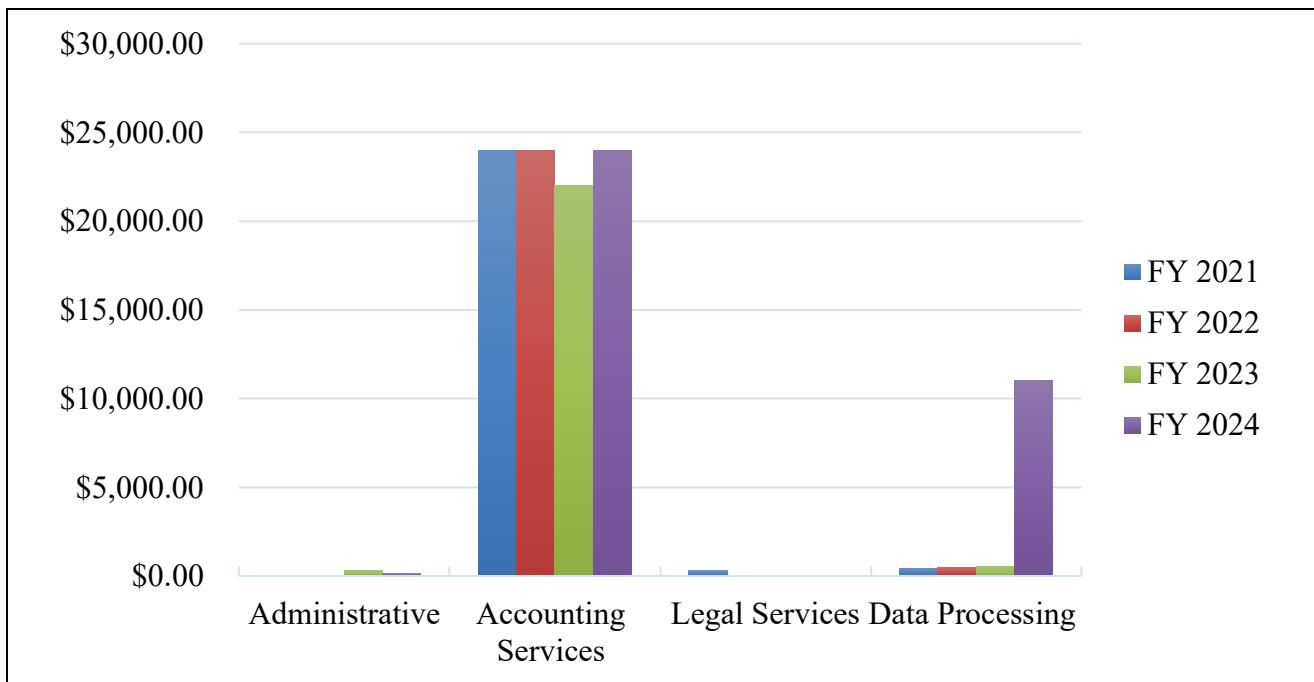
Note: Operating disbursements do not include reversions to the Education Trust Fund.

Summary Schedule of Professional Services Disbursements*

As of September 30th				
Type of Service	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Administrative Services	\$	\$	\$301.80	\$152.80
Accounting Services	24,000.00	24,000.00	22,000.00	24,000.00
Legal Services	300.00			
Data Processing Services	432.38	476.03	535.00	11,003.00
Total	\$24,732.38	\$24,476.03	\$22,836.80	\$35,155.80

*Detailed information presented in Appendix II of this report.

Professional Services Disbursements



QUESTIONNAIRES

Commission Member Questionnaire

A letter was sent to all eleven members of the Sickle Cell Oversight and Regulatory Commission requesting participation in our survey. Five participated in our survey. The percentages are based on the number who responded to the question.

1. What do you consider the most significant issue(s) facing the Alabama Sickle Cell Oversight and Regulatory Commission and how is the Commission addressing these issues?

Commission Member #1 – “A lack of cohesiveness between the commission and chapters. There is a certain level of authority that the commission has instead of partnership with the chapters to ensure continuity of care in the state.”

Commission Member #2 – “Funding is the most significant issues. The commission has reached out to various state representatives to assist us in requesting additional funding.

There is a need for all Sickle cell patients in the state to be identified. There is a process called mapping which can capture patients who may not have been identified. Additional funding will help us collect data. We are currently being funded by outdated data.”

Commission Member #3 – “timely meeting reports.”

Commission Member #4 – “Increase funding and education.”

Commission Member #5 – “I think the biggest issue is ensuring consistency of follow-up and due diligence from the community based organizations. They have undergone leadership turnover and need to get back on track. We (the SCD centers) are trying to help them through education on sickle cell disease and expectations.”

2. What, if any, changes to the Commission’s laws are needed?

Commission Member #1 – “Focus more on the objective & purposes of the commission.”

Commission Member #2 – “The Sickle Cell Oversight Regulatory Commission is governed by state statutes. We can only make a request if we need an item addressed. Most Changes are made without any request from us.”

Commission Member #3 – “unsure.”

Commission Member #4 – “No response.”

Commission Member #5 – “No new laws are needed at this time though a change in allocation is needed. The largest number of people living with sickle cell disease in AL is in Birmingham but more funding is allocated to Mobile. This should be changed to mirror the patient population's locations. The other issue is that the funding was based on previous number of people in which only 2000 people were estimated to have sickle cell disease in Alabama. We now know (with new research) that approximately 4300 people in the state of sickle cell disease thus more funding is needed to ensure appropriate quality care for those people.”

3. Do you think the Commission is adequately funded?

Yes	1	20%
No	4	80%

4. Do you think the Commission is adequately staffed?

Yes	3	60%
Unknown	2	40%

5. Does the Commission receive regular reports on its operations from the Executive Director?

Yes	2	40%
No	3	60%

6. Has the Commission experienced any significant change to its operations?

Yes	2	40%
No	3	60%

7. Does the Commission plan to make any significant changes to its operations?

Yes	1	20%
No	2	40%
Unknown	2	40%

8. Do you have any additional comments you would like to make?

Commission Member #1 – “None.”

Commission Member #2 – “Sickle cell disease in the state of Alabams is not considered a catastrophic illness. The patients who suffer from the disease could receive much needed medical support if the disease was reclassified. The Community Based Center could give them additional information to make their lives better and be exposed to better medical support.”

Commission Member #3 – “np.”

Commission Member #4 – “No comments.”

Commission Member #5 – “I would be happy to share the sickle cell surveillance data that demonstrates the increase in people living with sickle cell disease and where people live in the state. More resources could help us preventatively manage patients more effectively and reduce their need for the overcrowded hospitals.”

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Applicable Statutes

Section 22-10B-1 Establishment.

There is created and established the Alabama Sickle Cell Oversight and Regulatory Commission. (*Acts 1996, No. 96-727, p. 1219, §1.*)

Section 22-10B-2 Composition; reimbursement for expenditures.

(a) The commission shall consist of the following members:

(1) Two members shall be appointed by the Governor.

(2) One member shall be appointed by the University of South Alabama Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center.

(3) One member shall be appointed by the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

(4) One member shall be appointed by the Children's Hospital of Birmingham.

(5) Each of the seven chapters of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America-Alabama Chapter, Incorporated, shall appoint one member.

(b) Appointees to the commission shall be citizens of this state and shall be subject to confirmation by the Senate, and upon confirmation, serve for a term of four years. The membership of the commission shall be inclusive and reflect the racial, gender, geographic, urban/rural, and economic diversity of the state. The commission shall annually report to the Legislature by the second legislative day of each regular session the extent to which the commission has complied with the diversity provisions of this subsection. In the event of the death or resignation of any member of the commission, a successor shall be appointed by the original appointing authority and the successor appointed to the vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. The members shall elect from their membership a chair and a vice chair at an organizational meeting held no later than 30 days after appointments to the commission are confirmed.

(c) Members of the commission shall receive no salaries but may be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenditures incurred in the performance of their official duties pursuant to Article 2 of Chapter 7 of Title 36. Expenses of the commission are to be paid from funds available to the commission.

(d) A member who has failed to attend three consecutive properly noticed meetings may be removed at the request of the commission.

(*Acts 1996, No. 96-727, p. 1219, §2; Act 2010-277, p. 500, §3; Act 2015-317, §1.*)

Section 22-10B-3 Duties.

(a) The Alabama Sickle Cell Oversight and Regulatory Commission shall be designated as the agency to insure the delivery of sickle cell services pursuant to Section 22-10B-5 to affected persons in all counties in Alabama and assist in establishing geographical service delivery boundaries. The commission shall promulgate guidelines for creating uniformity in the delivery of services and the management of statewide programs.

(b) The commission shall also promulgate rules pursuant to the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act for handling complaints regarding service and management of statewide programs and addressing any other discrepancies brought to the attention of the commission. The commission shall not have the authority to promulgate rules regarding medical care. Any rule promulgated shall not be construed to establish a standard of care for physicians licensed to practice medicine.

(*Acts 1996, No. 96-727, p. 1219, §3; Act 2000-697, p. 1420, §1; Act 2015-317, §1.*)

Section 22-10B-4 Approval and funding to provide services; budget.

All persons, firms, corporations, unincorporated associations, state agencies, units of local government, or any public or private entity requesting public funding to provide quality sickle cell services shall receive approval biannually from the commission. The commission shall allocate the funds from any appropriation by the state for sickle cell treatment and education, and shall be responsible for submitting a consolidated budget and any other financial information required of state agencies, pursuant to the Budget Management Act.

(Acts 1996, No. 96-727, p. 1219, §4; Act 2000-697, p. 1420, §1.)

Section 22-10B-5 Sickle cell services.

The sickle cell services shall include all of the following:

- (1) Public and professional health education which shall be provided by persons specially trained for the task.
- (2) Screening of all newborns within a designated area for sickle cell disease by accurate laboratory techniques.
- (3) Genetic counseling and decision-making counseling which shall be offered to all parents of infants who are affected with Sickle Cell Disease and to those parents and patients at risk of having other children affected with this disease.
- (4) Medical referral and follow-up which shall consist of a prompt definitive diagnosis of patients found to have medically significant hemoglobin and the medical management of painful episodes, infections, and other complications which shall be provided by physicians and other medical professionals.
- (5) Psychosocial support services which shall be provided to help patients affected with Sickle Cell Disease to live a happy and successful life.

(Acts 1996, No. 96-727, p. 1219, §5.)

Section 22-10B-6 Status as enumerated agency under Section 41-20-3(a)(6).

This commission shall be an enumerated agency pursuant to Section 41-20-3(a)(6).

(Acts 1996, No. 96-727, p. 1219, §6.)

Section 22-10B-7 Exemption of Alabama Department of Public Health.

The Alabama Department of Public Health shall be exempt from any and all provisions of this chapter.

(Acts 1996, No. 96-727, p. 1219, §7.)

Appendix II: Professional Services by Vendor

	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
<u>Administrative Services</u>				
<i>Advertising</i>				
Legislative Services Agency	\$	\$	\$300.00	\$150.00
<i>Department of Finance</i>				
Mailing Services			1.80	2.80
Total Administrative Services			301.80	152.80
 <u>Accounting Services</u>				
<i>Accounting And Auditing-Professional</i>				
Smith Warren Management Services, Inc.	24,000.00	24,000.00	22,000.00	24,000.00
Total Accounting Services	24,000.00	24,000.00	24,000.00	24,000.00
 <u>Legal Services</u>				
<i>Attorney</i>				
Attorney General's Office	300.00			
Total Legal Services	300.00			
 <u>Data Processing Services</u>				
<i>Data Processing Personnel Services - Professional</i>				
Office Of Information Technology				10,430.00
<i>Comptroller Services</i>				
Department of Finance	432.38	476.03	535.00	573.00
Total Data Processing Services	432.38	476.03	535.00	11,003.00
 Total Professional Services	\$24,732.38	\$24,476.03	\$22,836.80	\$35,155.80

Appendix III: Board Members



ALABAMA SICKLE CELL OVERSIGHT AND REGULATORY COMMISSION

2777 Zelda Road Montgomery, AL 36106 Phone: (334) 420-7238 Fax: (334) 263-6115

January 29, 2025

Kierra Burston
Examiners of Public Accounts
Post Office Box 302251
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2251

Dear Ms. Burston,

Please find below the name, expiration term and city for each currently serving member of the Commission.

Commissioners	Expiration Date	Location
Felicia L. Wilson, M.D.	March 14, 2022	Mobile
Katherine Long	March 14, 2022	Birmingham
Linda Garrett	June 5, 2027	Dothan
Julie Kanter	June 5, 2027	Birmingham
James Belton	April 18, 2027	Wetumpka
Janet Martin	June 5, 2027	Huntsville
Jacqueline C. Williams	June 5, 2027	Tuscaloosa
Leah J. Wiggins	June 5, 2027	Birmingham
Ardie Pack-Mabien	June 5, 2027	Satsuma
Lee M. Hilliard,	June 5, 2027	Birmingham
Tokie Dunn	June 5, 2027	Eight Mile
Katisha Vance	April 7, 2029	Birmingham
Jennifer Harris	April 7, 2029	Tuscaloosa

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Keith E. Warren".

Keith E. Warren
Executive Director

Appendix IV: Board's Response



ALABAMA SICKLE CELL OVERSIGHT AND REGULATORY COMMISSION

2740 Zelda Road, Third Floor • Montgomery, AL 36106
Phone: (334) 420-7238 • Fax: (334) 263-6115 • Email: alsicklecell@alstateboard.com

June 27, 2025

Dixie B. Thomas
Director of Operational Audits
Examiners of Public Accounts
Post Office Box 302251
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2251

RE: Sunset Audit Significant Issues/Prior Findings Response

Dear Mrs. Thomas,

Please find below the responses to the Sunset Audit letter dated June 16, 2025.

Significant Issue 2025-001 (Response provided by Board Counsel, Ms. Sara Rogan, Assistant Attorney General)

I am writing to address the issue in the report from the Sunset Committee concerning the emergency contract. In February 2024, it was brought to my attention that the Commission's contract with Smith Warren was due to expire on September 30, 2024. At that point, I began working on the RFP. The Commission voted during their February 20, 2024 meeting to approve the RFP with certain amendments. I subsequently submitted the RFP, and it was advertised from March 1, 2024, to March 28, 2024, during which time Smith Warren submitted a response.

The Commission met on June 18, 2024, and, *inter alia*, discussed the RFP response. The Commission was unable to reach a decision that day about awarding the RFP. A special meeting was held July 22, 2024, at which point the Commission voted to reject Smith Warren's proposal, amend the RFP, and re-publish it. The amended RFP was advertised from August 6, 2024, to August 28, 2024; Smith Warren again submitted a response.

On September 24, 2024, the Commission voted to award the contract to Smith Warren. My intention at that point was to meet the next deadline for contract review, *i.e.*, October 24, 2024. However, on October 17, 2024, I emailed Purchasing because I had received an email (on October 9, 2024) that any documents that required signatures from Purchasing would need to be sent by October 18, 2024, and I was unable to make that deadline. In my October 17, 2024 email, I let Purchasing know that, because I could not make the October 18, 2024 deadline for signatures, I would no longer be able to make the October 24, 2024 deadline for the submission. Accordingly, the next submission deadline was November 18, 2024.

On November 12, 2024, I emailed Purchasing asking for review of the contract before I obtained signatures on it, but, unfortunately, I did not hear back. I proceeded to get signatures so that I could make the November 18, 2024 deadline. On the day of the deadline, after sending the contract to Purchasing for a signature, I learned of language that was missing from the contract. And there was not enough time for me to fix the issues and get the Commission Chair's signature. That is why that deadline was missed as well.

Given the Commission's decision to amend and re-publish the RFP and the issues with the fall deadlines, an emergency contract was necessary.

Significant Issues from Questionnaires

Significant Issue 2025-002 – During the last year and the request for proposal process, the reference communication issues from the questionnaires has been identified and both the commission staff along with the chapters and centers are dedicated to correcting these issues. The chapter and center executive directors and staff have initiated quarterly meetings to discuss goals, newborn screening data from the Alabama Department of Health and Human Services, upcoming events, identify support needed as well as upcoming and completed events and fund raisers to better serve the sickle cell clients in the state.

The Commission Executive Director and staff have increased communications with Commissioners regarding upcoming meetings, draft minutes, website updates and any other information that needs to be shared virtually or to the centers and

chapters. The Staff is committed to keeping the Commissioners updated and to ensure that website is updated as well so information is readily available to all.

STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS/SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Prior Finding 2012-01:

As you can see from the status in the audit report, all Secretary of State postings for Commission member terms and expirations are current and remain current since May 2022. This prior finding is resolved and has been resolved since 2022.

Prior Significant Issue 2017-002:

The Commission continues to be underfunded regarding the Sickle Cell Centers and Chapters. The Commission administrative budget is adequately funded and has successfully reimbursed commission members' travel expenses for the first time. The Commission and Executive Director are very appreciative of the administrative budget.

The additional funds needed are for the centers and chapters that receive allocations through the Commission by the Education Trust Fund. The funds allocated and distributed to Sickle Cell Chapters assist with sickle cell clients to travel to medical appointments both locally or to a medical appointment at UAB or USA. With additional funds, Chapters would be able to provide additional transportation opportunities either through vans, bus passes or commercial transportation for clients to receive the care and/or monitoring needed.

The additional funds needed for centers would allow additional research for sickle cell care and cures needed for current sickle cell clients and for newborns as well. These centers do an outstanding job with research and care on limited resources. The Commission appreciates the previous increases from the legislature with Sen. Coleman-Madison and Rep. Barbara Drummond's leadership.

I would like to thank the Examiners of Public Accounts for their hard work conducting both audits simultaneously. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any additional information or have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Keith E. Warren".

Keith E. Warren
Executive Director