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**TO:** District Superintendents of BOCES  
Superintendents of Public School Districts,  
Administrators of Public, Charter, and Nonpublic Schools

**FROM:** Kathleen R. DeCataldo

**DATE:** June 15, 2022

**SUBJECT: Dominic Murray Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act**

The Dominic Murray Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act, Chapter 500 of the Laws of 2021, and Commissioner's regulation §136.9 are **effective July 1, 2022**. The Act was written to ensure that schools, students, and parents are provided with critical, lifesaving information on sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) risks, signs and symptoms, to ensure students at risk are evaluated prior to participation in athletics, and that SCA is immediately recognized and treated to prevent death. The Act requires:

- The Commissioner of Health to develop information, in conjunction with the Commissioner of Education, relating to pupils exhibiting signs or symptoms of pending or increased risk of sudden cardiac arrest;
- Directs the Commissioner of Education to post the information on the Department's website;
- All schools must include such information<sup>1</sup> in any permission form, consent form, or similar document that may be required for a student's participation in interscholastic athletics or reference how to obtain such information from the Department and Department of Health's websites, or on the school's website, if one exists;
- The Commissioner of Education to promulgate regulations requiring that any student displaying signs or symptoms of pending or increased risk of sudden cardiac arrest shall be immediately removed from athletic activities, and shall not resume athletic activity until he or she has been evaluated by and received written and signed authorization from a licensed physician; and retain the authorization on file in the student's permanent health record.

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is defined as the abrupt and unexpected loss of heart function. SCA can be fatal if not treated within minutes, and even with treatment death may occur. Immediate treatment is cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and use of an automatic external defibrillator (AED). Public schools, BOCES and charter schools are reminded that they are required, pursuant to [Education Law Article 19 §917](#), to have at least one staff person who has undergone the training mandated in Public Health Law for

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<sup>1</sup> Until the Department of Health's website becomes available, schools are to post or provide the information from the sample parent letter as the source of information on consent forms available on [NYSED Health Services webpage](#)

CPR and AED use, assure that AED equipment is provided in an instructional facility where students are present and during any school-sponsored athletic contest or school-sponsored competitive athletic event held at any location. Schools are encouraged to plan for these emergencies and develop protocols and communication plans recommended in [Managing Emergency Health Care and Communicable Diseases in the School Setting, October 2022](#).

Although SCA is rare<sup>2</sup> -- the incidence of sudden cardiac death (SCD) on the playing field is 0.61 in 100,000 -- there are steps parents/guardians and school personnel can take to identify students who may be at risk and help to identify students exhibiting signs or symptoms. These signs or symptoms may be misinterpreted or disregarded by the student or others but are an important indication that a student should be seen by a healthcare provider for an evaluation. Additionally, a student may have personal risk factors or family history risk factors that indicate they are potentially at increased risk for SCA and should be evaluated by a healthcare provider **prior to** participating in athletics.

Preventing SCA before it happens is the best way to save a life.<sup>3</sup> The [Interval Health History](#) for Athletics must be completed prior to each sports season unless a physical examination has been conducted within 30 days before the start of the season. The updated form contains questions to elicit potential risk for cardiac conditions and to identify students who need to see a healthcare provider for further evaluation. A sample letter for parents/guardians is available on the [NYSED Health Services webpage](#) to explain the purpose of completing the form. Schools and directors of school health services (a.k.a. medical directors) are strongly encouraged to require the parent/guardian to return this form with the signed consent. See [School Health Examination Guidelines \(nysed.gov.\)](#) for more information on requirements for participation in interscholastic athletics.

The lists of signs and symptoms, and risk factors listed below, developed in collaboration with the Department of Health and pediatric cardiologists, indicate when a student may be at risk for SCA<sup>4</sup>.

### 1. Signs or symptoms

- Fainting or seizure, especially during or right after exercise or with excitement or startle
- Racing heart, palpitations, or irregular heartbeat
- Dizziness, lightheadedness, or extreme fatigue with exercise
- Chest pain or discomfort with exercise
- Excessive shortness of breath during exercise
- Excessive, unexpected fatigue during or after exercise

### 2. Risk Factors

- Personal Risk Factors:

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<sup>2</sup> Maron BJ, Doerer JJ, Haas TS, et al. Sudden deaths in young competitive athletes: analysis of 1866 deaths in the United States, 1980-2006. *Circulation* 2009;119:1085-92. 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.108.804617

<sup>3</sup> [Parent Heart Watch | Sudden Cardiac Arrest In Youth Prevention | SCA](#)

<sup>4</sup> SECTION ON CARDIOLOGY AND CARDIAC SURGERY, Robert Campbell, Stuart Berger, Michael J. Ackerman, W. Robert Morrow, Kathy Jenkins, L. LuAnn Minich, Geoffrey L. Rosenthal, Christopher S. Snyder, James Twedell; Pediatric Sudden Cardiac Arrest. *Pediatrics* April 2012; 129 (4): e1094–e1102. 10.1542/peds.2012-0144. [Pediatric Sudden Cardiac Arrest | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics \(aap.org\)](#)

- Use of diet pills, performance-enhancing supplements, energy drinks, or drugs such as cocaine, inhalants, or “recreational” drugs.<sup>5</sup>
- Elevated blood pressure or cholesterol.
- History of health care provider ordered test(s) for heart related issues.
- Family History Risk Factors:
  - Family history of known heart abnormalities or sudden death before 50 years of age
  - Family members with *unexplained* fainting, seizures, drowning, near drowning or car accidents before 50 years of age
  - Structural heart abnormality, repaired or unrepaired
  - Any relative diagnosed with the following conditions:
    - Enlarged Heart/ Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy/Dilated Cardiomyopathy
    - Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy
    - Heart rhythm problems, long or short QT interval
    - Brugada Syndrome
    - Catecholaminergic Ventricular Tachycardia
    - Marfan Syndrome- aortic rupture
    - Heart attack at 50 years or younger
    - Pacemaker or implanted cardiac defibrillator (ICD)

Any student with such signs or symptoms, family history or personal risk factors should be evaluated by a healthcare provider before participating in athletics. This is important since SCA can be triggered by athletic activities in students at risk.<sup>6</sup>

It is imperative that students are educated on the risks and symptoms of SCA and encouraged to report any of the signs or symptoms to their coach or athletic trainer, and parent/guardian. Administration, coaches, and athletic trainers will want to foster a culture of acceptance, where the health and safety of the athletes is foremost as early identification and treatment of a student at risk for SCA may save their life.

Any student displaying signs or symptoms of pending SCA must be immediately removed from athletic activities and not resume athletic activities until they have been evaluated by and received written signed authorization to do so from a licensed **physician**. This authorization must be kept on file in the student’s cumulative health record maintained by the school.

Finally, the law requires that coaches of extra class athletic activities<sup>7</sup> in both public and nonpublic schools complete a course in first aid knowledge and skills from a nationally recognized organization, as defined in paragraph (D) of [section 3000-B of Public Health Law](#). Such course must include instruction in recognizing signs and symptoms of cardiac arrest or sudden cardiac arrest. The first aid [Courses Accepted as Meeting the Coaches](#)

<sup>5</sup> [SCA Prevention Toolkit – Eric Paredes Save A Life Foundation \(epsavealife.org\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> Halabchi, Farzin et al. “Sudden cardiac death in young athletes; a literature review and special considerations in Asia.” *Asian journal of sports medicine* vol. 2,1 (2011): 1-15. doi:10.5812/asjms.34818

<sup>7</sup> Extra-class athletic activities mean those sessions organized for instruction and practice in skills, attitudes, and knowledge through participation in individual, group, and team activities organized on an intramural, extramural, or interschool athletic basis to supplement regular physical education class instruction [8 NYCRR 135.1(h)].

[First Aid and CPR/AED Requirement \(nysed.gov\)](#) for coaches include this mandatory content.

For questions, please contact the Office of Student Support Services at [studentsupportservices@nysed.gov](mailto:studentsupportservices@nysed.gov) or 518-486-6090.