

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Revised

House Bill 427

(Delegate Hixson, *et al.*)

Ways and Means and Health and  
Government Operations

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Education - Maryland Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Act**

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This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop and implement a program to provide sudden cardiac arrest awareness to coaches, school personnel, student athletes, and parents in collaboration with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), each local board of education, and other experts and stakeholders.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2014.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** MSDE can develop and implement a program to provide sudden cardiac arrest awareness using existing resources. DHMH can collaborate with MSDE on developing the program using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Local school systems can provide student athletes and their parents or guardians with the required information about sudden cardiac arrest using existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The sudden cardiac arrest program developed by MSDE must include (1) the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest and (2) the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing a symptom of sudden cardiac arrest.

The program must include a process to verify that a coach has received information relating to the program.

Before a student enrolled in a public school may participate in an authorized athletic activity, the local board of education must provide a sudden cardiac arrest symptoms and warning signs information sheet to the student and the student's parent or guardian; both must acknowledge the receipt of this sheet by signing a statement. MSDE must create the information sheet and the acknowledgement statement.

MSDE may use materials available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Parent Heart Watch, Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes Foundation, or any other appropriate entity. A public school may hold an informational meeting before the start of each athletic season regarding the symptoms and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest.

#### *Information for Participants and Parents or Guardians*

Before an individual participates in an authorized athletic activity on school property, the local board of education must provide, or require that a third party provide (1) information on sudden cardiac arrest to the individual and, if applicable, a parent or guardian of the individual and (2) notice that acknowledgement of the receipt of the information.

The information must be in the form of a separate information sheet, or a notice of the registration form for a youth sports program stating that information on sudden cardiac arrest is available, including directions on how to receive the information electronically. The individual and, if applicable, the parent or guardian of the individual must acknowledge the receipt of the information in a specified manner.

#### *Youth Sports Programs*

A "youth sports program" is defined as a program organized for recreational athletic competition or instruction for participants who are younger than 19 years old.

A youth sports program that uses a public school facility must provide annually to the local board of education or the board's agent a statement of intent to comply for all its athletic activities with the requirement to provide participants and parents and guardians with information on sudden cardiac arrest and notice that acknowledgement of the receipt of the information is required. A youth sports program that does not use a public school facility is encouraged to follow the guidelines.

A youth sports program must make available information on sudden cardiac arrest developed by MSDE to coaches, youth athletes, and the parents and guardians of youth athletes. A coach of a youth sports program must review the information.

**Current Law:** A youth sports program must make available information on concussions and head injuries developed by MSDE to coaches, youth athletes, and the parents or guardians of youth athletes. A coach of a youth sports program must review the information.

A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or other head injury in a practice or game must be removed from play at that time, and may not return to play until the youth athlete has obtained written clearance from a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

According to the Code of Maryland Regulations, each local board of education has to develop and implement a high school automated external defibrillator (AED) Program, with at least one AED onsite in each public high school and one individual trained in operation and AED use present at each school-sponsored athletic event. Likewise, at least one trained individual has to be on site at each high school during the regular school day. An AED coordinator must also be designated, who is trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and AED operation.

**Background:** Sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death for student athletes. Thankfully, it is relatively rare; there are fewer than 100 cases per year in the United States. However, every incident is tragic to families and communities. Without immediate use of an AED or CPR, sudden cardiac arrest has a very high risk of death. Each minute before defibrillation is said to increase the risk of death by about 10%.

Sudden cardiac arrest of student athletes occurs most commonly during or just after physical exertion. It is usually the result of underlying, and predominately unsuspected, cardiovascular disease, but it may also be due to trauma or other causes. It is most prevalent among athletes participating in football and basketball, but can occur to any student athlete.

Pennsylvania enacted legislation in 2012 which requires all student athlete coaches to complete a sudden cardiac arrest training course once per school year. To meet that requirement, the Pennsylvania Department of Health offers an online 20 minute training course designed to educate athletic trainers, coaches, parents, athletes, and other interested parties on the topic of sudden cardiac arrest. New Jersey enacted legislation in 2013 that requires AEDs for youth athletic events and required schools to establish certain plans relating to sudden cardiac arrests.

**Local Expenditures:** Local school systems can provide student athletes and their parents or guardians with the required information about sudden cardiac arrest using existing resources. The Department of Legislative Services advises that local school systems are currently required to verify that coaches, student athletes, and their parents or guardians receive information about concussions. Thus, any increase in costs will be negligible.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Harford County, Department of Legislative Services

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