

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 733  
Ways and Means

(Delegates Hill and Wu)

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Youth Sports Safety Advisory Commission

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This bill establishes a Youth Sports Safety Advisory Commission, specifies membership on the commission, and requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to staff the commission. Commission members are not entitled to receive compensation but may receive reimbursement under standard State travel regulations. By December 31, 2024, the commission must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Maryland State Board of Education, MDH, and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect October 1, 2023, and terminates September 30, 2028.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. MDH can staff the commission with existing resources. No effect on revenues.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The commission must meet at least twice each year and must:

- study evidence-based policies and practices for maximizing safety for youth athletes at different age levels, with a concentration on those under the age of 15, and stages of brain development based on national research;
- seek input from nationally recognized youth sports oversight organizations;

- study ways to reduce injury risk levels to youth athletes at different ages; and
- make recommendations for implementation of evidence-based best practices for minimizing injury risks for youth athletes.

**Current Law:** Youth sports programs must make available information on concussions, head injuries, and sudden cardiac arrest developed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to coaches, youth athletes, and the parents or guardians of youth athletes. A coach of a youth sports program is required to review the information.

A youth athlete or student 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. Each school must use the graduated return to play protocols instituted in the [Policies and Programs on Concussions for Public Schools and Youth Sport Programs](#).

Youth sports programs seeking to use school facilities must verify in writing that they have distributed concussion information to parents or guardians and have received verifiable acknowledgment of receipt. Each youth sports program must annually affirm to the local school system its compliance with concussion information procedures.

MSDE must develop policies and implement a program to provide awareness to coaches, school personnel, students, and the parents or guardians of students, in collaboration with MDH, each local board of education, and other specified entities, on:

- the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, including fainting, difficulty breathing, chest pains, dizziness, and abnormal heart rate; and
- the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing a symptom of sudden cardiac arrest.

Before an individual participates in an authorized athletic activity on school property, the county board of education shall 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 acknowledgment of the receipt of the information by the individual and, if applicable, the parent or guardian of the individual, is required. A youth sports program that uses a public school facility shall provide annually to the county board or the board's agent a statement of intent to comply for all its athletic activities with sudden cardiac arrest awareness requirements. A youth sports program that does not use a public school facility is encouraged to follow these guidelines.

MSDE, in collaboration with the MDH, each local board of education, and other specified entities, must develop a [model policy for preseason-practice heat acclimatization guidelines for student athletes](#). Each local board must adopt preseason-practice heat acclimatization guidelines for student athletes consistent with the model policy.

**Additional Comments:** The Department of Legislative Services notes that the commission's only reporting requirement is due December 31, 2024, but the commission remains in existence until September 2028, and it must continue to meet at least twice a year.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1235 of 2022 and HB 1346 of 2020.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 2023  
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Analysis by: Scott P. Gates

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510