

HOUSE BILL 837

F1, J1

6lr1794
CF SB 593

By: **Delegates Ebersole, Feldmark, Boyce, Fair, and Palakovich Carr**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education – Student Athletic Activities – Physical Examinations and**
3 **Cardiovascular Prescreening**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring a certain physical examination used to determine the physical
5 fitness of a student seeking to participate in interscholastic sports to include a
6 certain cardiovascular prescreening; requiring certain health care providers who
7 perform certain physical examinations for students participating in interscholastic
8 sports to include a cardiovascular prescreening as part of the examination; requiring
9 the State Department of Education, in consultation with the Maryland Department
10 of Health to develop certain guidelines; requiring certain nonpublic schools that offer
11 athletic activities for students to develop policies and programs to provide certain
12 information on sudden cardiac arrest to certain persons participating in the
13 nonpublic school's athletic programs; and generally relating to student athletic
14 activities, physical examinations, and cardiovascular prescreening.

15 BY adding to
16 Article – Education
17 Section 7–402.1
18 Annotated Code of Maryland
19 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

20 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
21 Article – Education
22 Section 7–436
23 Annotated Code of Maryland
24 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

25 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
26 Article – Health – General
27 Section 14–501(a)(1), (3), and (5) and (b)
28 Annotated Code of Maryland

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Health – General
Section 14–501(a)(4)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

7–402.1.

(A) IN THIS SECTION, “CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCREENING” MEANS A SET OF
TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS DESIGNED TO ASSESS AN INDIVIDUAL’S HEART HEALTH,
IDENTIFY RISK FACTORS FOR HEART DISEASE, AND DETECT ANY UNDERLYING
CARDIOVASCULAR ABNORMALITIES BEFORE SYMPTOMS APPEAR, INCLUDING:

(1) A TARGETED PERSONAL AND FAMILY HISTORY; AND

(2) A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION BASED ON NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED,
EVIDENCE–BASED GUIDELINES RECOMMENDED BY ORGANIZATIONS FOCUSED ON
CARDIOVASCULAR CARE IN PEDIATRIC POPULATIONS.

(B) THIS SECTION APPLIES TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS
THAT HOLD A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL ISSUED BY THE STATE BOARD UNDER §
2–206 OF THIS ARTICLE THAT REQUIRES STUDENTS TO RECEIVE A PHYSICAL
EXAMINATION DETERMINING PHYSICAL FITNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN
INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS.

(C) A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OF A STUDENT USED TO DETERMINE THE
STUDENT’S PHYSICAL FITNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS,
INCLUDING A TRY–OUT, PRACTICE, OR CONTEST OF A SCHOOL TEAM, SHALL
INCLUDE A CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCREENING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION
BEFORE THE STUDENT PARTICIPATES IN AN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORT.

(D) (1) (I) BEGINNING IN THE 2026–2027 SCHOOL YEAR, A QUALIFIED
HEALTH CARE PROVIDER WHO PERFORMS PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS UNDER § 7–402
OF THIS SUBTITLE FOR STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS OR
FOR A NONPUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT, SHALL INCLUDE A CARDIOVASCULAR
PRESCREENING AS A PART OF THE EXAMINATION.

(II) A CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCREENING MAY NOT BE CONDUCTED EARLIER THAN THE 90-DAY PERIOD BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF THE SCHOOL YEAR IN WHICH THE STUDENT INTENDS TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS.

(2) IF A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER DETERMINES THAT A STUDENT'S CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCREENING HAS A POSITIVE FINDING, THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER SHOULD DETERMINE WHETHER A REFERRAL TO A CARDIOLOGIST FOR FURTHER EVALUATION AND TESTING IS NECESSARY.

(E) THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SHALL DEVELOP GUIDELINES TO INCREASE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCREENING FOR CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN YOUTH SPORTS, INCLUDING POLICIES, PROGRAMS, TRAINING, AND CONTINUING EDUCATION ON:

(1) HOW TO COMPLETE A CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCREENING, INCLUDING COLLECTING A FAMILY HISTORY AND PERSONAL REPORTS OF SYMPTOMS;

(2) IDENTIFYING EARLY SIGNS OF CARDIAC ARREST THROUGH PHYSICAL EXAMINATION; AND

(3) REFERRAL PROCEDURES FOR POSITIVE FINDINGS.

(F) (1) BEGINNING IN THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR, EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL SHALL REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD OR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO:

(I) HAD A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS;

(II) HAD A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION THAT INCLUDED A CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCREENING TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS; AND

(III) WERE GIVEN A REFERRAL TO A CARDIOLOGIST FOR FURTHER EVALUATION AND TESTING RESULTING FROM A CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCREENING.

(2) THE COUNTY BOARD OR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT THE INFORMATION OBTAINED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION

1 TO THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH BY THE DATE ESTABLISHED THE
2 MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

3 (G) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 31 EACH YEAR, THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT
4 OF HEALTH SHALL PUBLISH A REPORT ON ITS WEBSITE:

5 (1) LISTING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO:

6 (I) HAD A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION TO PARTICIPATE IN
7 INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS;

8 (II) HAD A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION THAT INCLUDED A
9 CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCREENING TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS;
10 AND

11 (III) WERE GIVEN A REFERRAL TO A CARDIOLOGIST FOR
12 FURTHER EVALUATION AND TESTING RESULTING FROM A CARDIOVASCULAR
13 PRESCREENING; AND

14 (2) ANALYZING THE OUTCOMES OF THE CARDIOVASCULAR
15 PRESCREENING REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING UTILIZATION AND UPTAKE BY
16 CLINICIANS, THE PROPORTION OF POSITIVE SCREENINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS
17 FOR ANY ADDITIONAL DIAGNOSTIC STUDIES.

18 (H) THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MARYLAND
19 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS
20 SECTION.

21 7-436.

22 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

23 (2) (i) "Athletic activity" means:

24 1. Interscholastic athletics;

25 2. An athletic contest or competition that is sponsored by or
26 associated with a school; and

27 3. Practices and scrimmages.

28 (ii) "Athletic activity" includes cheerleading and sports sponsored by
29 school-affiliated organizations.

1 (3) “Sudden cardiac arrest” means a condition in which the heart suddenly
2 and unexpectedly stops beating.

3 (4) “Youth sports program” means a program organized for recreational
4 athletic competition or instruction for participants who are under the age of 19 years.

5 (b) Nothing in this section may be construed to create, establish, expand, reduce,
6 contract, or eliminate any civil liability on the part of a county board employee, school
7 employee, or youth sports program volunteer.

8 (c) (1) The Department shall develop policies and implement a program to
9 provide awareness to coaches, school personnel, students, and the parents or guardians of
10 students, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, each county board, the
11 Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association, the Maryland Athletic Trainers’
12 Association, Parent Heart Watch, and licensed health care providers who treat heart
13 issues, on:

14 (i) The nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, including
15 fainting, difficulty breathing, chest pains, dizziness, and abnormal heart rate; and

16 (ii) The risks associated with continuing to play or practice after
17 experiencing a symptom of sudden cardiac arrest.

18 (2) The program shall include a process to verify that a coach has received
19 information on the program developed under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

20 (3) (i) Before a student enrolled in a public school system in the State
21 may participate in an authorized athletic activity, the county board shall provide a sudden
22 cardiac arrest symptoms and warning signs information sheet to the student and a parent
23 or guardian of the student.

24 (ii) The student and the parent or guardian of the student shall sign
25 a statement acknowledging receipt of the information sheet.

26 (iii) The Department shall create the information sheet and
27 acknowledgment statement required under this paragraph.

28 (4) The Department may use materials available from the Centers for
29 Disease Control and Prevention, Parent Heart Watch, Sudden Arrhythmia Death
30 Syndromes Foundation, or any other appropriate entity to carry out the requirements of
31 this subsection.

32 (d) A public school may hold an informational meeting before the start of each
33 athletic season regarding the symptoms and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest.

34 (e) (1) Before an individual participates in an authorized athletic activity on
35 school property, the county board shall provide, or require that a third party provide:

(i) Information on sudden cardiac arrest to the individual and, if applicable, a parent or guardian of the individual; and

(ii) Notice that acknowledgment of the receipt of the information by the individual and, if applicable, the parent or guardian of the individual, is required.

(2) The information required under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be in the form of:

(i) A separate information sheet; or

(ii) A notice on 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.

(3) The individual and, if applicable, the parent or guardian of the individual shall:

(i) Acknowledge receipt of the information by:

1. Signature;

2. Checking an acknowledgment box on the registration form; or

3. Another method of written or electronic acknowledgment; and

(ii) Return the acknowledgment to the county board or third party.

(f) (1) 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 the requirements of subsection (e) of this section.

(2) A youth sports program that does not use a public school facility is encouraged to follow the guidelines of this section.

(3) A NONPUBLIC SCHOOL THAT HOLDS A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL ISSUED BY THE STATE BOARD UNDER § 2-206 OF THIS ARTICLE SHALL DEVELOP POLICIES AND PROGRAMS TO IMPLEMENT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION FOR ITS STUDENT ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES.

Article – Health – General

14-501.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(3) “Sudden cardiac arrest” means a condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating.

(4) “Youth athlete” means an individual who participates in an athletic activity in association with a youth sports program conducted:

(i) At a public school facility; [or]

(ii) **AT A FACILITY OF A NONPUBLIC SCHOOL THAT HOLDS A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL ISSUED BY THE STATE BOARD UNDER § 2–206 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE; OR**

(III) By a recreational athletic organization.

(5) “Youth sports program” means a program organized for recreational athletic competition or instruction for participants who are under the age of 19 years.

(b) (1) A youth sports program shall make available information on concussions, head injuries, and sudden cardiac arrest developed by the State Department of Education under §§ 7–433 and 7–436 of the Education Article to coaches, youth athletes, and the parents or guardians of youth athletes.

(2) A coach of a youth sports program shall review the information provided in paragraph (1) of this subsection.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.