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BILL:	Senate Bill 638	DATE:	March 8, 2022
SUBJECT:	Public Schools – Student Athletics – Requirements and Reports (Elijah Gorman Act)	COMMITTEE:	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
POSITION:	Information Only		
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EXPLANATION:

The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) is providing information for consideration regarding Senate Bill 638 – Public Schools – Student Athletes – Requirements and Emergency Action Plan (Elijah Gorman Act), which specifies criteria as it relates to education, training, and other requirements related to heat acclimatization and emergency action plans. The MPSSAA appreciates the sponsor’s sharing of proposed amendments. This letter responds to SB 638 as we understand it to be amended and advises the committee to consider two specific concerns related to SB 638.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The MPSSAA is committed to safeguarding the athletic experiences of all students. The amendments to Senate Bill 638 would call for the Maryland State Board of Education to develop and implement an educational program for student-athletes on the signs of heat stroke, concussion, brain injuries, and associated protocols. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Maryland State Department of Education and the 24 local educational agencies, the MPSSAA is charged with the development of the programs that safeguard the physical, mental, and moral welfare of high school students. For over 76 years, this MOU has provided for the MPSSAA to administer safe and meaningful participation opportunities within state and national health standards to student participants annually.

The MPSSAA recommends that MPSSAA Medical Advisory Committee, which is comprised of Orthopedist, Pediatricians, Athletic Trainers, Physical Therapists, Neurologists, Primary Care Physicians, School Nurses, and Local School System Athletic Administrators, as being best served to **develop** any required educational materials. Each local school system, who bears the responsibility of the day-to-day administration of the education of their students, is best served to **implement and deliver** educational materials as developed by the MPSSAA to their student participants.

ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIRMENTS

Senate Bill 638 calls for each member of the coaching staff to attend an interactive training twice each year on automated external defibrillators, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and heat acclimatization. This language is contrary to the best practices by The American Red Cross and American Heart Association, who certify training in automated external defibrillators and cardiopulmonary resuscitation every two years. Current requirements in training for head injuries is every two years as detailed in [COMAR 13A.06.08](#) *Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Events*.

The retention of highly qualified athletic administrators is a challenge for many local school systems because of the continuous increase in requirements to administer a school-wide athletic department in addition to their daily instruction and educational duties. The MPSSAA recommends Senate Bill 638 be further amended that any training requirements be aligned with national standards of every two years.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR CONSIDERTATION

Senate Bill 638 calls for each middle and high school to have an automated external defibrillator (AED) that is within a 2-minute walk from an athletic practice or event on school property. School facilities are either large acre campuses or often use alternative community parks and facilities. Senate Bill 638 will require local school systems to purchase portable AED devices to be available with every high school team actively participating in order to meet the requirements of the bill. At 200 member schools and approximately 10 high school programs operating at a time, upwards of 2,000 portable AED devices may need to be purchased, properly stored, and actively serviced. The MPSSAA advises that the most crucial part of any AED policy is that they are readily available in an unlocked location for immediate deployment to any practice or contest facility.

Currently, public schools and coaches are required to have someone trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator at every practice and contest, heat and hydration requirements, concussion management and training requirements, a 15-hour care and prevention course requirement to coach high school athletics, and a refresher every five years in care and prevention. The Maryland Department of Education and the MPSSAA currently require sign-off sheets from student-athletes on concussions and brain injuries in compliance with [COMAR 13A.06.08.05B](#), a required information sign-off sheet for student athletes related to [Sudden Cardiac Arrest](#), and provides a [guidance book on heat acclimation](#) to all member schools. In addition, the MPSSAA has secured Wet Bulb Globe Thermometer readers for all 200 MPSSAA member high schools through grant funding by the National Federation of State High School Associations.

The MPSSAA respectfully requests that you consider this information as you deliberate **Senate Bill 836**. Please contact R. Andrew Warner, at 410-767-0376, or robert.warner1@maryland.gov, for any additional information.