



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

February 25, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins  
Chair, Ways and Means Committee  
Room 131, Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

### **RE: House Bill 837 – Education – Student Athletic Activities – Physical Examinations and Cardiovascular Prescreening - Letter of Support with Amendments**

Dear Chair Wilkins and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments to House Bill (HB) 837 – Education – Student Athletic Activities – Physical Examinations and Cardiovascular Prescreening. This bill requires cardiovascular prescreening for students participating in interscholastic sports. It requires the Department to consult with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on developing guidelines, training, and regulations; and to develop an annual report based on an analysis of reporting submitted by county boards and local health departments.

The Department supports the bill's goal of ensuring that students receive cardiovascular prescreening before participating in interscholastic sports, consistent with nationally recognized guidelines. The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association's (MPSSAA) Medical Advisory Committee currently recommends cardiovascular prescreening based on the American Heart Association's 14-element cardiac history and physical examination, which has been endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and numerous other professional organizations.<sup>1,2</sup> This bill will require all public and nonpublic school students to have this or a similar cardiac prescreening conducted by a health care provider prior to sports participation.

The Department strongly supports facilitating student participation in school sports because they benefit students physically, mentally, academically, and socially.<sup>3</sup> As currently written, some elements of the bill will unintentionally create barriers to students participating in school sports. In

---

<sup>1</sup> MPSSAA Recommended Preparticipation Physical Form

[https://www.mpssaa.org/assets/1/6/Physical-Examination-Form\\_REVISED\\_May\\_2024.pdf](https://www.mpssaa.org/assets/1/6/Physical-Examination-Form_REVISED_May_2024.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Maron BJ, Friedman RA, Kligfield P, et al. (2014). [Assessment of the 12-lead ECG as a screening test for detection of cardiovascular disease in healthy general populations of young people \(12-25 Years of Age\): a scientific statement from the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology](#). *Circulation*.

<sup>3</sup> University of San Diego. (n.d.). The Benefits of Youth Sports in Child Development. University of San Diego Professional and Continuing Education. <https://pce.sandiego.edu/child-development-through-sports/>

particular, the Department believes the bill's requirement that cardiovascular prescreening occurs no more than 90 days before the start of the school year could create barriers to sports participation, especially in socioeconomically or medically disadvantaged communities with limited access to health care providers. Further, some students will see a health care provider for their annual preventive care visit outside of this 90-day window and will need to return for a separate preparticipation physical exam (PPE), which may not be covered by insurance or will require an additional copay. With no available evidence that guides the timing of a cardiovascular prescreening, the Department recommends requiring record of a cardiovascular prescreening within 12 months of a sport's tryout date.

The Department would be pleased to consult with MSDE on the development of guidelines for the use of cardiovascular prescreening as a required component of the PPE for interscholastic athletes in Maryland. However, health care provider training and continuing education on cardiovascular prescreening are already easily available for free or at a low cost from other sources.<sup>4,5</sup> The Department recommends identifying existing training resources rather than creating new materials.

The Department appreciates the bill's intention to ensure accountability and analyze the outcomes of cardiovascular prescreening through data collection and reporting. However, outcome studies already exist.<sup>6</sup> Further, the bill would require health care providers to disclose significant protected health information that schools do not need to confirm a student's cardiovascular prescreening and medical clearance for athletics. The bill's multiple data and reporting requirements will place an undue burden on health care providers, county boards, and local health departments and incur significant costs to these local agencies and the Department.

The Department believes that HB 837 has the potential to ensure Maryland student athletes receive appropriate cardiovascular prescreening by a qualified health care provider prior to participation in interscholastic sports. The Department respectfully asks the Committee to consider amendments removing requirements that may limit equitable student participation in athletics; are duplicative of existing resources; infringe upon student privacy; and place undue operational and financial burdens on health care providers, county boards, local health departments, the Department, and MSDE.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Meghan Lynch, Director of Governmental Affairs at [meghan.lynch@maryland.gov](mailto:meghan.lynch@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,



Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D.  
Secretary of Health

---

<sup>4</sup> Children's National Hospital, CME Webinar: Pre-participation Cardiac Screening of Teenage Athletes  
<https://innovationdistrict.childrensnational.org/cme-webinar-pre-participation-cardiac-screening-of-teenage-athletes/>

<sup>5</sup> eMedEvents, Cardiac Screening in Young Athletes  
<https://www.emedevents.com/online-cme-courses/webcasts/cardiac-screening-in-young-athletes>

<sup>6</sup> Petek, B. J., & Baggish, A. L. (2020). [Pre-participation Cardiovascular Screening in Young Competitive Athletes..](#)  
*Current emergency and hospital medicine reports.*

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 837  
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 3, strike beginning with “MAY” in line 1 through “SPORTS” in line 4 and substitute “**SHALL BE CONDUCTED ANNUALLY AS PART OF A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION DETERMINING PHYSICAL FITNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS.**”.

*Rationale:* The bill’s requirement that cardiovascular prescreening occurs no more than 90 days before the start of the school year could create barriers to sports participation, particularly in socioeconomically or medically disadvantaged communities with limited access to health care providers.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 3, strike beginning with “FOR” in line 12 through “ON:” in line 13 and substitute “**REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS.**”

*Rationale:* Health care provider training and continuing education on cardiovascular prescreening are already available for free or at a low cost from other sources. The Department recommends identifying existing training resources rather than creating new materials.

AMENDMENT NO. 3

On page 3, strike beginning with “(1)” on line 14 through page 4, line 20, inclusive.

*Rationale:* The bill would require health care providers to disclose significant protected health information that schools do not need to confirm a student’s cardiovascular prescreening and medical clearance for athletics. The bill’s multiple data and reporting requirements will place an undue burden on health care providers, county boards, and local health departments, and incur significant costs to these local agencies and the Department.