



Maryland

CHAPTER

Maryland Chapter
American College of Cardiology

1783 Forest Drive, Suite 238
Annapolis, MD 21401

www.marylandacc.org

February 23, 2026

Dear Chair Wilkins and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

As the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Cardiology, we are writing today to express our strong support for **House Bill 837** and **Senate Bill 593**, currently under consideration in the Maryland General Assembly. The Maryland Chapter represents cardiologists and cardiovascular team professionals who provide care to patients across our state. Our mission is to prevent cardiovascular disease and ensure the highest quality of care for Marylanders living with heart and vascular conditions. Consistent with this mission, we support HB 837 and SB 593.

HB 837 and SB 593 take an important step toward reducing the risk of sudden cardiac arrest among Maryland's student athletes by requiring a pre-participation screening questionnaire for youth as part of an athlete's annual physical examination. Research demonstrates that a carefully designed questionnaire—grounded in nationally recognized, evidence-based guidelines—can help identify young individuals who may be at increased risk due to concerning symptoms or a family history of cardiac disease.

These measures appropriately balance vigilance with practicality. A standardized screening questionnaire promotes efficient triage, increases awareness among families, coaches, and schools about the warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, and establishes clear pathways for further evaluation when indicated. At the same time, it helps ensure that additional cardiac testing is reserved for those students who need it most, thereby using healthcare resources responsibly and effectively.

The Maryland Chapter is dedicated to preventing sudden cardiac arrest and improving survival when such events occur. We have consistently supported policies that strengthen cardiovascular emergency preparedness in schools and community settings, including access to automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and well-developed emergency action plans. HB 837 and SB 593 represent another evidence-based approach that aligns public policy with established clinical best practices to safeguard the cardiovascular health of Maryland's student athletes.

We respectfully urge your favorable consideration of HB 837 and SB 593 to help protect the health and lives of young athletes throughout Maryland.

Sincerely,

Sammy Zakaria, MD, MPH, FACC

Governor, Maryland Chapter of the American College of Cardiology