



# Senate Education Committee

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## BILL AND AMENDMENT SUMMARY

House Bill 1610, Printer's No. 2441

Prime Sponsor: Vereb

### A. SYNOPSIS:

HB 1610 requires the development of guidelines to educate coaches, parents and student-athletes about the warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest; provides for the removal of student-athletes from participating in a sporting event if they show symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest; requires new training for coaches to recognize the symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest; and provides penalties for violation of the act.

### B. BILL ANALYSIS:

HB 1610 shall be known as the "Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act." It requires the Department of Education and Department of Health to develop guidelines and other relevant materials to educate students, parents and coaches about the warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, including the risks associated with continuing to play or practice when experiencing those symptoms. The departments may use existing materials developed by organizations such as Parent Heart Watch and Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes. They must post the guidelines on their respective websites.

Student-athletes at schools participating in the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) must annually and prior to participation in an *athletic activity* sign and return to their school an acknowledgement of receipt and review of the sudden cardiac arrest symptoms information sheet developed by the departments. An *athletic activity* is defined by the bill as interscholastic athletics; club-sponsored sports, including cheerleading and other sports activities that are school-affiliated; non-competitive cheerleading that is sponsored by or associated with a school entity; and all practices, interschool practices and scrimmages for all of these activities.

A school entity may also hold an informational meeting prior to the start of each athletic season to brief students, parents, coaches and other school officials about sudden cardiac arrest.

A student-athlete that exhibits any signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest while participating in an athletic event, as determined by a game official, coach, certified athletic trainer, licensed physician or other official, shall be removed from play. If the student-athlete has a history of these symptoms at any time prior to or following an athletic activity, the student shall not return to participation. A student-athlete removed from play may only participate in an

athletic activity once they are evaluated and cleared for return in writing by a licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or, if the athlete is referred to a cardiologist, a cardiologist.

School boards shall establish the following minimum penalties for a coach who fails to remove a student-athlete from play: 1) for a first violation, suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the remainder of the season; 2) for a second violation, suspension from coaching for the remainder of the season and the next season; 3) for a third violation, permanent suspension from coaching.

Coaches shall annually complete a sudden cardiac arrest training course offered by a provider approved by the Department of Health. Coaches shall not be eligible to coach until completion of the training.

The sponsors of youth athletic activities conducted outside a school entity are encouraged to follow the guidance issued by the departments.

Nothing in this act shall be construed to abridge or limit any rights provided under a collective bargaining agreement or any rights provided under the act of July 23, 1970 (P.L.563, No.195), known as the Public Employe Relations Act; or create, establish, expand, reduce, contract or eliminate any civil liability on the part of any school entity or school employee.

The bill takes effect in 60 days.

#### **C. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT EXISTING LAW:**

HB 1610 is a freestanding act. It is similar to Act 101 of 2011, which addressed concussions and head injuries in student-athletes.

#### **D. AMENDMENT A09999 SUMMARY:**

A09999 is a technical amendment that does the following:

- Clarifies that sudden cardiac arrest can have one or more symptoms.
- Allows a student who is removed from play or has exhibited signs of sudden cardiac arrest prior to or after an athletic activity to be cleared to participate in an athletic activity again by a licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or cardiologist.
- Removes a confusing referral reference, thus allowing a cardiologist to automatically sign off on the student-athlete.
- Encourages sponsors of youth athletic activities *not associated with a school entity* to follow the guidance of the act.
- Amends the section pertaining to collective bargaining agreements to read that the act shall not abridge or limit any rights provided under a current or existing collective bargaining agreement, thus allowing any future collective bargaining agreement to meet the requirements of the act.

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## HOUSE BILL

No. 1610 Session of  
2011

INTRODUCED BY VEREB, QUIGLEY, MATZIE, CREIGHTON, BOBACK,  
BRADFORD, BRIGGS, V. BROWN, BROWNLEE, DEASY, DONATUCCI,  
FARRY, FRANKEL, GEIST, GINGRICH, HARKINS, HENNESSEY, HESS,  
HORNAMAN, KAUFFMAN, KILLION, KOTIK, MANN, MICOZZIE, MURT,  
NEUMAN, M. O'BRIEN, O'NEILL, PASHINSKI, PYLE, QUINN, ROCK,  
SANTARSIERO, SCAVELLO, SCHRODER, STERN, SWANGER, TAYLOR,  
TOOHIL, WAGNER, YOUNGBLOOD, D. COSTA, READSHAW, RAPP, SONNEY,  
TOEPEL, SIMMONS, SACCONI, GILLEN, ADOLPH AND R. BROWN,  
JUNE 16, 2011

AS AMENDED ON SECOND CONSIDERATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2011

## AN ACT

1 Establishing standards for preventing sudden cardiac arrest and  
2 death in student athletes; assigning duties to the Department  
3 of Health and the Department of Education; and imposing  
4 penalties.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Sudden  
9 Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act.

10 Section 2. Definitions.

11 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
12 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
13 context clearly indicates otherwise:

14 "Athletic activity." All of the following:

15 (1) Interscholastic athletics.

1           (2) An athletic contest or competition, other than  
2 interscholastic athletics, that is sponsored by or associated  
3 with a school entity, including cheerleading, club-sponsored  
4 sports activities and sports activities sponsored by school-  
5 affiliated organizations.

6           (3) Noncompetitive cheerleading that is sponsored by or  
7 associated with a school entity.

8           (4) Practices, interschool practices and scrimmages for  
9 all of the activities listed under paragraphs (1), (2) and  
10 (3).


11 "Department." The Department of Health of the Commonwealth.

12 "Interscholastic athletics." As defined in section 1602-A of  
13 the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public  
14 School Code of 1949.

15 "School entity." As defined in section 1602-A of the act of  
16 March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code  
17 of 1949.

18 Section 3. Sudden cardiac arrest.

19 (a) Educational materials.--

20           (1) The department and the Department of Education shall  
21 develop and post on their publicly accessible Internet  
22 websites guidelines and other relevant materials to inform  
23 and educate students participating in or desiring to  
24 participate in an athletic activity, their parents and their  
25 coaches about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac  
26 arrest, including the risks associated with continuing to  
27 play or practice after experiencing the following symptoms:  
28 fainting, difficulty breathing, chest pains, dizziness and  
29 ABNORMAL racing heart rate. 

30           (2) In developing the guidelines and materials, the

1 department and the Department of Education may utilize  
2 existing materials developed by organizations, such as Parent  
3 Heart Watch and Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes.

4 (3) A student participating in or desiring to  
5 participate in an athletic activity and the student's parent  
6 or guardian shall, each school year and prior to  
7 participation by the student in an athletic activity, sign  
8 and return to the student's school an acknowledgment of  
9 receipt and review of the sudden cardiac arrest symptoms and  
10 warning sign information sheet developed under this  
11 subsection.

12 (b) Informational meeting.--A school entity may hold an  
13 informational meeting prior to the start of each athletic season  
14 for all ages of competitors regarding the symptoms and warning  
15 signs of sudden cardiac arrest. In addition to students,  
16 parents, coaches and other school officials, informational  
17 meetings may include physicians, pediatric cardiologists and  
18 athletic trainers.

19 (c) Removal from play.--

20 (1) A student who, as determined by a game official,  
21 coach from the student's team, certified athletic trainer,  
22 licensed physician or other official designated by the  
23 student's school entity, exhibits signs or symptoms of sudden  
24 cardiac arrest while participating in an athletic activity  
25 shall be removed by the coach from participation at that  
26 time.

27 (2) If a student is known to have exhibited signs or  
28 symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest at any time prior to or  
29 following an athletic activity, the student shall be  
30 prevented from participating in an athletic activity.

1           (3) The student shall not return to participation in an  
2     athletic activity until the student is evaluated and cleared  
3     for return to participation in writing by ~~an appropriate~~  
4     ~~medical professional~~ A LICENSED PHYSICIAN OR CERTIFIED  
5     REGISTERED NURSE PRACTITIONER OR, IF REFERRED BY A LICENSED  
6     PHYSICIAN OR CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE PRACTITIONER TO A  
7     CARDIOLOGIST FOR EVALUATION, THE WRITTEN CLEARANCE IS  
8     PROVIDED BY THE CARDIOLOGIST.

9           (4) In order to help determine whether a student is  
10    ready to return to play, the ~~appropriate medical professional~~  
11    LICENSED PHYSICIAN OR CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE PRACTITIONER  
12    may consult any other licensed or certified medical  
13    professionals.

14    (d) Training course.--

15           (1) Once each school year, a coach of an athletic  
16    activity shall complete the sudden cardiac arrest training  
17    course offered by a provider approved by the department.

18           (2) A coach of an athletic activity shall not coach the  
19    athletic activity until the coach completes the training  
20    course required under this subsection.

21    (e) Penalties.--The governing body of a school entity shall  
22    establish the following minimum penalties for a coach found in  
23    violation of the requirements under subsection (c), which  
24    penalties shall take effect two years following the effective  
25    date of this section:

26           (1) For a first violation, suspension from coaching any  
27    athletic activity for the remainder of the season.

28           (2) For a second violation, suspension from coaching any  
29    athletic activity for the remainder of the season and for the  
30    next season.

1           (3) For a third violation, permanent suspension from  
2 coaching any athletic activity.

3           (f) Other youth athletic activities.--The sponsors of youth  
4 athletic activities are encouraged to follow the guidance stated  
5 in this act.

6           (g) Construction.--Nothing in this act shall be construed  
7 to:

8           (1) abridge or limit any rights provided under a  
9 collective bargaining agreement or any rights provided under  
10 the act of July 23, 1970 (P.L.563, No.195), known as the  
11 Public Employe Relations Act; or

12           (2) create, establish, expand, reduce, contract or  
13 eliminate any civil liability on the part of any school  
14 entity or school employee.

15 Section 4. Effective date.

16 This act shall take effect in 60 days.

## LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

## AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1610

Sponsor:

Printer's No. 2441

1 Amend Bill, page 2, line 27, by striking out "the following  
2 symptoms:" and inserting

3 one or more symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, including

4 Amend Bill, page 3, line 2, by striking out the comma after  
5 "organizations"

6 Amend Bill, page 3, line 9, by striking out "the" and  
7 inserting

8 a

9 Amend Bill, page 3, line 10, by striking out "sign" and  
10 inserting

11 signs

12 Amend Bill, page 3, line 26, by inserting after "time"

13 , subject to paragraph (3)

14 Amend Bill, page 3, line 30, by inserting after "activity"

15 , subject to paragraph (3)

16 Amend Bill, page 4, lines 1 through 8, by striking out all of  
17 said lines and inserting

18 (3) A student removed or prevented from participating in  
19 an athletic activity under paragraph (1) or (2) shall not  
20 return to participation until the student is evaluated and  
21 cleared for return to participation in writing by a licensed  
22 physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or  
23 cardiologist.

24 Amend Bill, page 5, line 4, by inserting after "activities"  
25 not associated with a school entity

26 Amend Bill, page 5, line 9, by inserting after "agreement"

1 in effect on the effective date of this section