

No. 2012-59

AN ACT

HB 1610

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

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

Section 1. Short title.

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

Section 2. Definitions.

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

"Athletic activity." All of the following:

- (1) Interscholastic athletics.
- (2) An athletic contest or competition, other than interscholastic athletics, that is sponsored by or associated with a school entity, including cheerleading, club-sponsored sports activities and sports activities sponsored by school-affiliated organizations.
- (3) Noncompetitive cheerleading that is sponsored by or associated with a school entity.
- (4) Practices, interschool practices and scrimmages for all of the activities listed under paragraphs (1), (2) and (3).

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

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

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

Section 3. Sudden cardiac arrest.

(a) Educational materials.—

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

(2) In developing the guidelines and materials, the department and the Department of Education may utilize existing materials developed by organizations such as Parent Heart Watch and Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes.

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

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

(c) Removal from play.—

(1) A student who, as determined by a game official, coach from the student's team, certified athletic trainer, licensed physician or other official designated by the student's school entity, exhibits signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest while participating in an athletic activity shall be removed by the coach from participation at that time, subject to paragraph (3).

(2) If a student is known to have exhibited signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest at any time prior to or following an athletic activity, the student shall be prevented from participating in an athletic activity, subject to paragraph (3).

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

(4) In order to help determine whether a student is ready to return to play, the licensed physician or certified registered nurse practitioner may consult any other licensed or certified medical professionals.

(d) Training course.—

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

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

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

(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 any athletic activity for the remainder of the season and for the next season.

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

(f) Other youth athletic activities.—The sponsors of youth athletic activities not associated with a school entity are encouraged to follow the guidance stated in this act.

(g) Construction.—Nothing in this act shall be construed to:

(1) abridge or limit any rights provided under a collective bargaining agreement in effect on the effective date of this section or any rights provided under the act of July 23, 1970 (P.L.563, No.195), known as the Public Employe Relations Act; or

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

Section 4. Effective date.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

APPROVED—The 30th day of May, A.D. 2012

TOM CORBETT