pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

ATHLETE/PARENT/GUARDIAN SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST INFORMATION AND RECEIPT/REVIEW ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sudden cardiac arrest takes the lives of thousands of children every year and is the number one killer of student athletes. A student who passes out during or right after exercise, could have an undiagnosed, and potentially- fatal, heart condition. Let's learn more about protecting our children's hearts.

What is sudden cardiac arrest?
Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs and the person collapses. This is not the same thing as a heart attack.

Are there warning signs?
Yes, but not everyone experiences them.

- Fainting or seizures during or immediately after exercise.
- A racing heart – may feel like your heart is beating out of your chest.
- Chest pains
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Extreme fatigue

What Can We Do About It?
Understand the symptoms. Many of these symptoms are present when a student athlete is practicing or playing hard. So, pay attention to the timing. For instance, a racing heart on the sidelines, or fatigue in class or at home is concerning. Passing out is ALWAYS a concern.

Be prepared. Cardiac arrest can only be treated with CPR and an AED. Most people will die if they do not receive this help within a few minutes. Coaches and players should know how to perform chest compressions. An automated external defibrillator (AED) should be available at practices and games (within three minutes to be exact).

Get screened. The current standard of care for assessing the risk of sudden cardiac arrest in student athletes was established by the American Heart Association. It includes (a) family history, (b) medical history, and (c) physical exam. Some studies show that adding an electrocardiogram (ECG/EKG) increases the detection of underlying heart conditions. However, more research will need to be done before the medical community agrees to change the standard.

In the interim, speak to your doctor about an ECG/EKG for your child. You will likely pay out of pocket for this test unless symptoms are present. Additionally, the ECG/EKG interpretation should be conducted by a physician familiar with the screening protocol – special guidelines developed to assess the heart of a student athlete. This will reduce the false positive rate and the ordering of additional tests for normal variations.

Requirements of this law. Act 73 seeks to raise awareness. Parents must read and sign this form acknowledging the risks and warning signs. Coaches must complete sudden cardiac arrest training annually. If a student exhibits any of the symptoms above, the student athlete must be removed from play and cleared by a licensed medical professional before returning to play.

I have reviewed this form and understand the risk of sudden cardiac arrest facing my child and steps that can be taken to achieve a positive outcome.

_____	_____	_____
Signature of Student-Athlete	Print Student-Athlete's Name	Date
_____	_____	_____
Signature of Parent/Guardian	Print Parent/Guardian Name	Date