

House Bill 78

By: Representatives Clark of the 98th, Cooper of the 43rd, Jackson of the 128th, Glanton of the 75th, Mathiak of the 73rd, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 15 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia
2 Annotated, relating to miscellaneous provisions under the "Quality Basic Education Act,"
3 so as to provide for guidelines and other relevant materials to inform high school students
4 participating in interscholastic athletic activities about the nature and warning signs of
5 sudden cardiac arrest; to provide for definitions; to provide for informational meetings; to
6 provide for removal from an athletic activity under certain circumstances and to establish
7 return to play policies; to require annual review by coaches; to provide for limited liability;
8 to provide a short title; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
9 purposes.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

11 **SECTION 1.**

12 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Jeremy Nelson and Nick Blakely Sudden
13 Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act."

14 **SECTION 2.**

15 Part 15 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
16 relating to miscellaneous provisions under the "Quality Basic Education Act," is amended
17 by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

18 "20-2-324.4.

19 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

20 (1) 'Interscholastic athletic activity' means interscholastic athletics and practices,
21 interschool practices, and scrimmages related to interscholastic athletics.

22 (2) 'School' means a public or private high school in this state, including all charter
23 schools.

24 (3) 'Student' means a student in grades nine through 12.

25 (b)(1) The Department of Education shall develop and post on its publicly accessible
26 website guidelines and other relevant materials to inform and educate students
27 participating in or desiring to participate in an interscholastic athletic activity, their
28 parents or guardians, and coaches about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac
29 arrest, including the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing
30 the following symptoms: fainting or seizures during exercise, unexplained shortness of
31 breath, chest pains, dizziness, racing heart rate, or extreme fatigue. In developing the
32 guidelines and materials about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, the
33 Department of Education may utilize educational videos available at no cost to the state
34 for the purpose of educating coaches about sudden cardiac arrest.

35 (2) A student participating in or desiring to participate in an interscholastic athletic
36 activity and the student's parent or guardian shall, each school year and prior to
37 participation by the student in an interscholastic athletic activity, sign and return to the
38 student's school an acknowledgment of receipt and review of the sudden cardiac arrest
39 symptoms and warning signs.

40 (c) A school shall hold an informational meeting prior to the start of each athletic season
41 regarding the symptoms and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest. At such informational
42 meeting, an information sheet on sudden cardiac arrest symptoms and warning signs shall
43 be provided to each student's parent or guardian. In addition to students, parents or
44 guardians, coaches, and other school officials, such informational meetings may include
45 physicians, pediatric cardiologists, and athletic trainers.

46 (d)(1) A student who passes out or faints while participating in, or immediately
47 following, an interscholastic athletic activity, or who is known to have passed out or
48 fainted while participating in or immediately following an interscholastic athletic activity,
49 shall be removed from participation in the interscholastic athletic activity at that time by
50 the athletic director, coach, or athletic trainer.

51 (2) A student who exhibits any of the other symptoms set forth in paragraph (1) of
52 subsection (b) of this Code section while participating in, or immediately following, an
53 interscholastic athletic activity may be removed from participation in the interscholastic
54 athletic activity by an athletic trainer, if the athletic trainer reasonably believes that such
55 symptoms are cardiac related. In the absence of an athletic trainer, coaches who observe
56 any of the other symptoms set forth in paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of this Code
57 section may notify the parents or guardians of the student so that the parents or guardians
58 can determine what treatment, if any, the student should seek.

59 (3) A student who is removed from participation in an interscholastic athletic activity
60 pursuant to this subsection shall not be permitted to return to participation in an

61 interscholastic athletic activity until the student is evaluated and cleared for return to
62 participation in writing by an appropriate health care provider.

63 (e)(1) Once each school year, each coach of an interscholastic athletic activity shall
64 review the guidelines and relevant materials or view an educational video approved by
65 the Department of Education pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of this Code
66 section.

67 (2) A coach shall not be eligible to coach an interscholastic athletic activity until he or
68 she completes the requirements contained in this subsection.

69 (f) No coach shall be liable for his or her actions or inactions under this Code section
70 unless he or she is found to have acted in a grossly negligent or reckless manner.

71 (g) The sponsors of youth athletic activities, as defined in paragraph (4) of subsection (a)
72 of Code Section 20-2-324.1, are encouraged to implement the provisions of this Code
73 section."

74 **SECTION 3.**

75 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.