

House Bill 873

By: Representatives Clark of the 98th, Meadows of the 5th, Dickson of the 6th, Jackson of the 128th, Dempsey of the 13th, 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 enact the "Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act"; to provide for guidelines and
4 other relevant materials to inform students participating in athletic activities about the nature
5 and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest; to provide for definitions; to provide for
6 informational meetings; to provide for removal from an athletic activity under certain
7 circumstances and to establish return to play policies; to require annual review by coaches;
8 to provide for limited liability; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and
9 for other 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 "Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act."

13 SECTION 2.

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

17 "20-2-324.2.

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

19 (1) 'Athletic activity' means:

20 (A) Interscholastic athletics;

21 (B) An athletic contest or competition, other than interscholastic athletics, that is
22 sponsored by or associated with a school, including cheerleading and sports activities
23 sponsored by clubs and school affiliated organizations;

24 (C) Noncompetitive cheerleading that is sponsored by or associated with a school; and

25 (D) Practices, interschool practices, and scrimmages for all of the activities listed under
26 subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of this paragraph.

27 (2) 'School' means a public or private school in this state.

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

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

42 (c) A school may hold an informational meeting prior to the start of each athletic season
43 for all ages of competitors regarding the symptoms and warning signs of sudden cardiac
44 arrest. In addition to students, parents or guardians, coaches, and other school officials,
45 such informational meetings may include physicians, pediatric cardiologists, and athletic
46 trainers.

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

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

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

62 student is evaluated and cleared for return to participation in writing by an appropriate
63 health care provider.

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

67 (2) A coach shall not be eligible to coach an athletic activity until he or she completes
68 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 procedures included in this
73 Code section."

74 **SECTION 2.**

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