

SENATE BILL 985

By Norris

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68,
relative to sudden cardiac arrest prevention.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68, is amended by adding the following language as a new chapter 54:

68-54-101.

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

68-54-102.

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) “Community-based youth athletic activity” or “youth athletic activity” means an athletic activity organized by a city, county, business, or nonprofit organization when the majority of the participants are under eighteen (18) years of age, and are engaging in an organized athletic game or competition against another team, club, or entity or in practice or preparation for an organized game or competition against another team, club, or entity. “Community-based youth athletic activity” does not include college or university activities or an activity which is entered into for instructional purposes only, an athletic activity that is incidental to a nonathletic program, or a lesson;
- (2) “Department” means the department of health;
- (3) “Health care provider” means a Tennessee licensed medical doctor (M.D.) or an osteopathic physician (D.O.);

(4) "Person" means any individual or governmental entity, corporation, association, organization, nonprofit institution, or other entity or such entities' representatives; and

(5) "School youth athletic activity" means a school or a local education agency organized athletic activity when the majority of the participants are under eighteen (18) years of age, and are engaging in an organized athletic game or competition against another team, club, or entity or in practice or preparation for an organized game or competition against another team, club, or entity. "School youth athletic activity" does not include college or university activities, an activity which is entered into for instructional purposes only, or an athletic activity that is incidental to a nonathletic program, or a lesson.

68-54-103.

(a) This section applies to school youth athletic activity.

(b)

(1) The governing authority of each public and nonpublic elementary school, middle school, junior high school, and high school, working through guidance approved by the department of health and communicated through the department of education, shall at a minimum:

(A) Adopt guidelines and other pertinent information and forms as approved by the department of health to inform and educate coaches, school administrators, youth athletes, and their parents or guardians of the nature, risk, and symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, including the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing any of the following symptoms:

(i) Fainting or seizures during exercise;

(ii) Unexplained shortness of breath;

(iii) Chest pains;

(iv) Racing heart rate; or

(v) Extreme fatigue;

(B) Require annual completion by all coaches, whether the coach is employed or a volunteer, and by school athletic directors of a sudden cardiac arrest education program approved by the department. In developing the program, the department may use, at no cost to the state, materials and resources created by organizations, such as Simon's Fund, for the purpose of educating coaches about sudden cardiac arrest. The department shall make the sudden cardiac arrest education course program available on its web site for any school to access free of charge;

(C) Require that, on a yearly basis, a sudden cardiac arrest information sheet be signed and returned by each coach and athletic director and, if appointed, a licensed health care professional, to the lead administrator of a nonpublic school or, for a public school, the local education agency's director of schools prior to initiating practice or competition for the year;

(D) Require that, on a yearly basis, a sudden cardiac arrest information sheet be reviewed by each youth athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian. The information sheet shall be signed and returned by the youth athlete, if the youth athlete is eighteen (18) years of age or older, otherwise by the athlete's parent or guardian, prior to the youth athlete's initiating practice or competition, to confirm that both the parent or guardian and the youth athlete have reviewed the information and understand its contents;

(E) Maintain all documentation of the completion of a sudden cardiac arrest education course program and signed sudden cardiac arrest information sheets for a period of three (3) years;

(F) Establish as policy the immediate removal of any youth athlete who passes out or faints while participating in an athletic activity, or who exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- (i) Unexplained shortness of breath;
- (ii) Chest pains;
- (iii) Racing heart rate; or
- (iv) Extreme fatigue; and

(G) Establish as policy that a youth athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to the practice or competition during which the youth athlete experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest and not return to play or participate in any supervised team activities involving physical exertion, including games, competitions, or practices, until the youth athlete is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance from the health care provider for a full or graduated return to play.

(2) After a youth athlete who has experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest has been evaluated and received clearance for a graduated return to play from a health care provider, then a school may allow a licensed health care professional, if available, with specific knowledge of the youth athlete's condition to manage the youth athlete's graduated return to play based upon the health care provider's recommendations. The licensed health care professional, if not the youth athlete's health care provider, shall provide

updates to the health care provider on the progress of the youth athlete, if requested.

(3) No licensed health care professional or other person acting in good faith within the authority prescribed under this act shall be liable on account of any act or omission in good faith while so engaged; provided, that “good faith,” as used in this act, shall not include willful misconduct, gross negligence, or reckless disregard.

(c) The local education agency, in consultation with the head of the school youth athletic activity, may establish the following minimum penalties for a coach found in violation of ignoring a youth athlete’s sudden cardiac arrest symptoms or allowing the youth to return to the practice or competition during which the youth athlete experienced the symptoms without written clearance from the health care provider for a full or graduated return to play:

(1) For a first violation, suspension from coaching any school youth athletic activity for the remainder of the season;

(2) For a second violation, suspension from coaching any school youth athletic activity for the remainder of the season and the next season; and

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

68-54-104.

(a) This section applies to community-based youth athletic activity.

(b)

(1) Any city, county, business, or nonprofit organization that organizes a community-based youth athletic activity for which an activity fee is charged, working through guidance from the department of health, shall at a minimum:

(A) Adopt guidelines and other pertinent information and forms as developed by the department of health to inform and educate the director of the youth athletic activity, coaches, youth athletes, and their parents or guardians of the nature, risk, and symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, including the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- (i) Fainting or seizures during exercise;
- (ii) Unexplained shortness of breath;
- (iii) Chest pains;
- (iv) Racing heart rate; or
- (v) Extreme fatigue;

(B) Require annual completion by all coaches, whether the coach is employed or a volunteer, and, if appointed, the licensed health care professional of a sudden cardiac arrest education program approved by the department. In developing the program, the department may use, at no cost to the state, materials and resources created by organizations, such as Simon's Fund, for the purpose of educating coaches about sudden cardiac arrest. The department shall make the sudden cardiac arrest education course program available on its web site for any youth athletic activity operated by a city, county, business, or nonprofit organization to access free of charge;

(C) Require that, on a yearly basis, a sudden cardiac arrest information sheet be signed and returned by each coach to the head of the youth athletic activity prior to initiating practice or competition for the year;

(D) Require that, on a yearly basis, a sudden cardiac arrest information sheet be reviewed by each youth athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian. The information sheet shall be signed and returned by the youth athlete, if the youth athlete is eighteen (18) years of age or older, otherwise by the athlete's parent or guardian, prior to the youth athlete's initiating practice or competition, to confirm that both the parent or guardian and the youth athlete have reviewed the information and understand its contents;

(E) Maintain all documentation of the completion of a sudden cardiac arrest education course program and signed sudden cardiac arrest information sheets for a period of three (3) years;

(F) Establish as policy the immediate removal of any youth athlete who passes out or faints while participating in an athletic activity, or who exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- (i) Unexplained shortness of breath;
- (ii) Chest pains;
- (iii) Racing heart rate; or
- (iv) Extreme fatigue; and

(G) Establish as policy that a youth athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to the practice or competition during which the youth athlete experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest and not return to play or participate in any supervised team activities involving physical exertion, including games, competitions, or practices, until the youth athlete is evaluated by a health care provider

and receives written clearance from the health care provider for a full or graduated return to play.

(2) After a youth athlete who has experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest has been evaluated and received clearance for a graduated return to play from a health care provider, then the organizer of the community-based youth athletic activity may allow a licensed health care professional, if available, with specific knowledge of the youth athlete's condition to manage the youth athlete's graduated return to play based upon the health care provider's recommendations. The licensed health care professional, if not the youth athlete's health care provider, shall provide updates to the health care provider on the progress of the youth athlete, if requested.

(3) No coach, head of any athletic activity, licensed health care professional, or other person acting in good faith within the authority prescribed under this act shall be liable on account of any act or omission in good faith while so engaged; provided, that "good faith," as used in this act, shall not include willful misconduct, gross negligence, or reckless disregard.

(c) The head of the community-based youth athletic activity may establish the following minimum penalties for a coach found in violation of ignoring a youth athlete's sudden cardiac arrest symptoms or allowing the youth to return to the practice or competition during which the youth athlete experienced the symptoms without written clearance from the health care provider for a full or graduated return to play:

(1) For a first violation, suspension from coaching any community-based youth athletic activity for the remainder of the season;

(2) For a second violation, suspension from coaching any community-based youth athletic activity for the remainder of the season and the next season;
and

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

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015, the public welfare requiring it.