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ASSEMBLYMAN, SEVENTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT

Assembly Bill 1639

Youth Sports: Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act

Background

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) has emerged as a leading cause of death among people under age 25. According to the American Heart Association, SCA affects nearly 10,000 youth per year. Many children and parents are unaware they have a potentially fatal heart condition until it is too late. In fact, 72% of those who suffered an SCA experienced prior symptoms but did not recognize them as life threatening. Many symptoms of a heart condition can offer preemptive warning signs when knowing what to look for.

Youth participating in sports are particularly susceptible, given SCA is the #1 killer of student athletes. The National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research cites that more athletes die from sudden cardiac arrest than from sport-related trauma. Educating coaches, parents and players about the potential warning signs of undetected heart conditions can dramatically reduce the number of victims that SCA claims.

Further, coaches, parents and players are oftentimes unprepared to act when SCA strikes. 92% of SCA victims will die if not treated within minutes. Thus, it is vital for those affected by SCA to be in the presence of people who know the cardiac chain of survival.

Current Law

Manages the return to play in situations where an athlete suffers a concussion. Schools that elect to offer athletic programs are required to immediately remove an athlete from a school-sponsored athletic activity for the remainder of the practice or game if they are suspected of sustaining a concussion. The athlete may only return to that activity after he or she has been evaluated by, and receives written clearance from, a licensed health care provider.

This Bill

AB 1639 would similarly require the removal from play of a youth athlete who appears to be suffering from SCA related symptoms. The bill would also require that athletes get cleared by a licensed healthcare professional before returning to play or practice. AB 1639 also requires youth coaches, athletes and their parents to sign a Sudden Cardiac Arrest information form before competing, and that coaches participate in annual training on the warning signs and risk factors.

Sponsor

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