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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - CARDIAC ARREST PREVENTION IN SCHOOL SPORTS

Introduced By: Senator Walter S. Felag

Date Introduced: January 18, 2017

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended
2 by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 91.1

4 THE SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST PREVENTION ACT

5 **16-91.1-1. Short title.**

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

7 **16-91.1-2. Definitions.**

8 For the purposes of this chapter, the term "youth sport program or activity" means any
9 program organized for recreational and/or athletic competition purposes by any school district, or
10 by any school participating in Rhode Island Interscholastic League competition, and whose
11 participants are nineteen (19) years of age or younger.

12 **16-91.1-3. School districts' guidelines to be developed and implemented.**

13 (a) The department of education and the department of health shall promulgate guidelines
14 to inform and educate coaches, teachers, school nurses, youth athletes, and their parents and/or
15 guardians about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, including the risks
16 associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing the following symptoms: fainting
17 or seizures during exercise, unexplained shortness of breath, chest pains, dizziness, racing heart
18 rate and extreme fatigue.

19 (b) School districts may use training materials made available at no cost to the school

1 district by organizations such as Simon's Fund, Parent Heart Watch, Sudden Arrhythmia Death
2 Syndromes Foundation, or training materials substantively and substantially similar thereto. The
3 department of education shall post links to training materials on its website. All coaches and
4 volunteers involved in a youth sport program or activity covered by this chapter must complete a
5 training course annually about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, including
6 the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing symptoms including,
7 fainting or seizures during exercise, unexplained shortness of breath, chest pains, dizziness,
8 racing heart rate and extreme fatigue. Training may consist of videos, classes, and any other
9 generally accepted mode and medium of providing information.

10 (c) Parents and/or guardians shall be provided with information as to the nature and
11 warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest prior to the start of every sport season and they shall sign
12 an acknowledgement as to their receipt of such information.

13 (d)(1) A student who, as determined by a game official, coach from the student's team,
14 certified athletic trainer, licensed physician or other official designated by the student's school
15 entity, exhibits signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest while participating in an athletic
16 activity shall be removed by the coach from participation at that time, subject to subsection (3) of
17 this section.

18 (2) If a student is known to have exhibited signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest at
19 any time prior to or following an athletic activity, the student shall be prevented from
20 participating in an athletic activity, subject to subsection (3) of this section.

21 (3) A student removed or prevented from participating in an athletic activity under
22 subsections (1) or (2) of this section shall not return to participation until the student is evaluated
23 and cleared for return to participation in writing by a licensed physician, certified registered nurse
24 practitioner or cardiologist.

25 (e) All school districts are encouraged to have an athletic trainer, or similarly trained
26 person, at all recreational and athletic events addressed by this statute.

27 **16-91.1-4. All other youth sports program.**

28 All other youth sports programs not specifically addressed by this chapter are encouraged
29 to follow the guidance set forth in this chapter for all program participants who are age nineteen
30 (19) and younger.

31 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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1 This act would address the potential for sudden cardiac arrest among student athletes by
2 raising awareness of the symptoms and requiring medical evaluations.

3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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