

MEDICAL SOCIETY
of the
STATE OF NEW YORK

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Division of Governmental Affairs
MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

**ON ASSEMBLY HEALTH COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

A. 4892 (CUSICK)

IN SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE

S. 3269 (LANZA)

An Act to amend the public health law, in relation to health care and wellness education and outreach programs for preventing sudden cardiac arrest among student athletes

This bill adds to the existing Health Care and Wellness Education and Outreach Program within the New York State Department of Health the need and importance of education and outreach programs for preventing sudden cardiac arrest among student athletes. The Medical Society of the State of New York supports this measure.

This bill adds to the existing Health Care and Wellness Education and Outreach Program within the New York State Department of Health the need and importance of education and outreach programs for preventing sudden cardiac arrest among student athletes. Under the bill's provisions, DOH will provide educational materials for students and their parents and guardians regarding sudden cardiac arrest. The materials would be developed in conjunction with the Commissioner of Education, the Medical Society of the State of New York, the New York Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Heart Association. The materials would include an explanation of sudden cardiac arrest, a description of early warning signs, and an overview of options that are privately available for screening.

Sudden death in young athletes is a rare but tragic event. The possibility that young, well-trained athletes at the high school, college, or professional level could die suddenly seems incomprehensible. It is a dramatic and tragic event that devastates families and the community. The tragedy of Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD) occurs in individuals under 40 years of age more often than most would guess. Physical exertion associated with competitive sports and other physical athletic activities can exacerbate a pre-existing condition and can result in an untimely death of a student. The State of New Jersey currently has a similar program where brochures are sent home to parents and guardians. This legislation would establish a similar program by developing brochures that could be given to parents as well as pediatricians to distribute.

Competitive sports are associated with an increase in the risk of sudden cardiovascular death (SCD) in susceptible adolescents and young adults with underlying cardiovascular disorders. In middle-age/older individuals, physical activity can be regarded as a 'two-edged sword': vigorous exertion increases the incidence of acute coronary events in those who did not exercise regularly, whereas habitual physical activity reduces the overall risk of myocardial infarction and SCD.

For all the reasons cited above, the Medical Society of the State of New York, strongly supports this measure and urges its enactment.

PFC/supp
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