

SENATE No. 1536

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

John C. Velis

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to sudden cardiac arrest awareness in student athletes.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>John C. Velis</i>	<i>Second Hampden and Hampshire</i>	
<i>Angelo L. D'Emilia</i>	<i>8th Plymouth</i>	<i>3/9/2021</i>

SENATE No. 1536

By Mr. Velis, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1536) of John C. Velis and Angelo L. D'Emilia for legislation relative to sudden cardiac arrest awareness in student athletes. Public Health.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act relative to sudden cardiac arrest awareness in student athletes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. This act shall be known as the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Act.

2 SECTION 2. Chapter 111 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition,
3 is hereby amended by inserting after section 222 the following section:-

4 Section 222A. Standards for preventing sudden cardiac arrest and death in student
5 athletes.

6 (a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the following
7 meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

8 “Athletic activity”, all of the following:

9 (1) Interscholastic athletics.

10 (2) An athletic contest or competition, other than interscholastic athletics, sponsored by
11 or associated with a school entity, including cheerleading, club-sponsored sports activities and
12 sports activities sponsored by the school or school-affiliated organizations.

13 (3) Noncompetitive cheerleading that is sponsored by or associated with a school entity.

14 (4) Practices, interschool practices and scrimmages for all of the activities listed under
15 paragraphs (1), (2) and (3).

16 “School entity”, all public schools and any school subject to the Massachusetts
17 Interscholastic Athletic Association rules.

18 (b) Education and Training–

19 (1) The department shall work with the Department of Education to develop and post on
20 its publicly accessible Internet websites guidelines and other relevant materials to inform and
21 educate students participating in or desiring to participate in an athletic activity, their parents and
22 their coaches about the symptoms and warning signs of heart disease, anatomical and electrical
23 abnormalities of the heart, cardiac distress, and sudden cardiac arrest, including the risks
24 associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing the following symptoms:
25 fainting or seizures during exercise, unexplained shortness of breath, chest pains, dizziness,
26 racing heart rate, extreme fatigue, and any other symptom deemed appropriate by the department
27 of Public Health.

28 (2) The Department shall direct the division of prevention and wellness to develop an
29 interscholastic athletic sudden cardiac arrest and death prevention program in which all public
30 schools and any school subject to the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association rules

31 shall participate. Participation in the program shall be required annually of coaches, trainers and
32 parent volunteers for any extracurricular athletic activity; physicians and nurses who are
33 employed by a school or school district or who volunteer to assist with an extracurricular athletic
34 activity; school athletic directors; directors responsible for a school marching band; and a parent
35 or legal guardian of a child who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity.

36 In developing the program, the division may use any of the materials readily available
37 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or educational videos created by Simon's
38 Fund for the purpose of educating coaches about sudden cardiac arrest, or other existing
39 materials developed by cause-specific non-profit organizations, such as Parent Heart Watch and
40 Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes, if the department deems them reliable and helpful. The
41 program shall include, but not be limited to:

42 (i) current training in recognizing the symptoms and warning signs of heart disease,
43 anatomical and electrical abnormalities of the heart, cardiac distress, and sudden cardiac arrest;
44 and (ii) providing students that participate in any extracurricular athletic activity,
45 including membership in a marching band, the following information annually: a summary of
46 department rules and regulations relative to safety regulations for students participation in
47 extracurricular athletic activities, including the medical protocol for participation in an
48 extracurricular athletic activity following cardiac symptoms and sudden cardiac arrest; written
49 information related to the recognition of symptoms of heart disease and cardiac abnormalities, as
50 well as sudden cardiac arrest.

51 The prevention program may be held in conjunction with the interscholastic athletic head
52 injury safety training program required under M.G.L. Ch. 111 Section 222(a), provided that both
53 required training standards are covered appropriately.

54 (3) A student participating in or desiring to participate in an athletic activity and the
55 student's parent or guardian shall, each school year and prior to participation by the student in an
56 athletic activity, sign and return to the student's school an acknowledgment of receipt and review
57 of the symptoms and warning sign information sheet developed under this subsection prior to
58 participation.

59 The department shall also develop forms on which students shall be instructed to provide
60 information relative to any cardiac medical history at the start of each sports season. These forms
61 shall require the signature of both the student and the parent or legal guardian thereof. Once
62 complete, the forms shall be forwarded to all coaches prior to allowing any student to participate
63 in an extracurricular athletic activity so as to provide coaches with up-to-date information
64 relative to an athlete's cardiac medical history and to enable coaches to identify students who are
65 at greater risk for sudden cardiac arrest.

66 The forms required under this subsection may be in conjunction with any forms required
67 under M.G.L. Ch 111 Section 222, provided that all requirements under both sections are met.

68 (4) A school entity may hold an informational meeting prior to the start of each athletic
69 season for all ages of competitors regarding the symptoms and warning signs of heart disease,
70 cardiac abnormalities, and sudden cardiac arrest. In addition to students, parents, guardians,
71 coaches and other school officials, informational meetings may include physicians, pediatric
72 cardiologists and athletic trainers.

73 (c) Removal from play –

74 (1) In accordance with M.G.L., Chapter 111, Section 222(c), A student who loses
75 consciousness while participating in, or immediately following, an athletic activity, must be
76 removed from participation at that time by the athletic director, coach or athletic trainer.

77 (2) A student who, as determined by a game official, coach from the student's team,
78 certified athletic trainer, licensed physician or other official designated by the student's school,
79 exhibits signs or symptoms set forth in this section during an athletic activity, may be removed
80 from participation by said game official, coach from the student's team, certified athletic trainer,
81 licensed physician or other official designated by the student's school, if he reasonably believes
82 that said symptoms are cardiac-related. In the absence of one of the persons listed in this
83 subsection, coaches who observe any of the other symptoms set forth in this section, should
84 notify the parent(s) of the student so that the parent(s) can determine what treatment, if any, the
85 student should seek.

86 (3) A student who is removed from play under this provision shall not be permitted return
87 to participation in an athletic activity until the student is evaluated and cleared for return to
88 participation in writing by an appropriate medical professional.

89 (d) The sponsors of youth athletic activities are encouraged to follow the guidance stated
90 in this section.

91 (e) The superintendent of the school district or the director of a school shall maintain
92 complete and accurate records of the district's or school's compliance with the requirements of
93 this section. A school that fails to comply with this section, as determined by the department,
94 shall be subject to penalties as determined by the department.

95 (f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to waive liability or immunity of a school
96 district or its officers or employees. This section shall not create any liability for a course of legal
97 action against a school district, its officers or employees.

98 (g) A person who volunteers to assist with an extracurricular athletic activity shall not be
99 liable for civil damages arising out of any act or omission relating to the requirements of this
100 section, unless such person is willfully or wantonly negligent in his act or omission.

101 (h) The division shall adopt regulations to carry out this section.