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Assembly Bill 379

(Concussion and Sudden Cardiac Arrest
Prevention Protocols)

Background

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) has emerged as a recurring cause of death among people under age 25. According to the American Heart Association, SCA affects between 7,000 to 16,000 youth per year. In fact, studies show that 1 in 300 youth has an undetected heart condition. Many children and their parents are unaware they have a potentially fatal heart abnormality until it is too late. In fact, 72% of those who suffered an SCA were reported to experience prior symptoms but did not recognize them as life threatening.

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 any other sport-related trauma. Educating coaches, parents and players about the potential warning signs of undetected heart conditions can dramatically reduce the amount of victims that SCA claims.

Further, coaches, parents, referees 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 an SCA victim to be in the presence of people who are prepared to respond to a cardiac emergency. Knowing the Cardiac Chain of Survival—call 911, start hands-only CPR, use the nearest automated external defibrillator (AED)—can mean the difference between life and death.

Current Law

AB 2007 (2016) requires youth sports organizations to remove an athlete from an athletic activity who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury. Parents and youth annually review information about the dangers of concussion and head injury, and coaches complete a concussion and head injury course.

This Bill

AB 379 would require the same protocols used for concussions in youth and high school sports to be used to help protect young athletes from sudden cardiac arrest.

1. Requires all youth sports leagues, camps and clubs to immediately remove an athlete from an athletic activity who faints, or who is suspected of experiencing warning signs that appear to be cardiovascular related.
2. Requires that parents and youth be given information annually regarding the warning signs and risk factors of sudden cardiac arrest, and how to respond to a cardiac emergency.
3. Requires coaches to successfully complete a sudden cardiac arrest prevention training course.

Sponsor

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