



## Professional Development Module Created to Help Health Professionals Identify Student-Athletes at Risk of Cardiac Arrest

**For Immediate Release**

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Sudden cardiac death is very rare in young athletes, but when it occurs, it is particularly tragic because it is often preventable through more thorough pre-screening. Such prevention measures are now requirements in the *Scholastic Student Safety Act*, which was signed into law by Gov. Christie on June 27, 2013.

The law mandates, among other requirements, the development of a Student-Athlete Cardiac Screening Professional Development Module (PD module). With the passage of the *Scholastic Student-Athlete Safety Act*, New Jersey has set the standard by requiring that screenings be conducted for the silent cardiac abnormalities that may lead to the sudden death of a student-athlete.

The purpose of completing the required PD module – a detailed, instructive video – is to supplement the cardiac assessment skills of physicians, advanced practice nurses and physician assistants who perform student-athlete pre-participation physical examinations.

"To our knowledge, this professional development module to enhance the assessment skills of health care providers is among the first in the U.S., if not *the* first in the nation," said Education Commissioner David C. Hespe. "This is one more example of how New Jersey leads the nation in recognizing that the health and safety of our students is as much a part of their education as standards and assessments. Hopefully, through this training module, our school health professionals can learn to identify those individuals who are at risk early enough to prevent an untimely death."

The state law required that the New Jersey Departments of Education and Health develop the PD module in consultation with the New Jersey Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the New Jersey Academy of Family Physicians, the American Heart Association and the New Jersey Chapter of the American College of Cardiology.

The New Jersey Chapter of the American College of Cardiology funded the development of the PD module, which will be available to all health professionals who provide student-athlete pre-screening prior to participation in school-sponsored interscholastic sports and intramurals.

"Members of the American College of Cardiology are committed to dramatically reducing the incidence, severity and complications of cardiovascular disease, and this training program will go a long way in promoting prevention, reducing disparities in health care, and improving personal and population-based cardiovascular health," said Dr. Joel Landzberg, president and governor of the New Jersey Chapter of the American College of Cardiology. "It's an honor to assist the state in developing and rolling out this important public health and education program."

Health care providers may access the module on the [Department of Education's website](#).