

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6492

AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN EXERTIONAL HEAT

Title: ILLNESS FOR COACHES, PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS.

Vote Date: 3/12/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/8/2021

File No.: 241

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill requires a person with a State Board of Education (SBE) coaching permit who coaches intramural or interscholastic athletics to complete an exertional heat illness awareness education program before beginning their coaching assignment for the season and review the program annually before the start of each coaching season. The training requirement begins in the 2022-23 school year. HB 6492 authorizes SBE to revoke the permits of coaches who do not comply with the above requirement.

It requires the education program to be developed or approved by January 1, 2022 by the intramural and interscholastic athletics governing authority in consultation with several organizations, one each which must represent: (1) licensed athletic trainers, (2) sports medicine doctors, (3) researchers of best practices in managing heat illness, and (4) county medical associations. The State Board of Education must publish the program on its website.

The bill requires these organizations to develop for school board use:

- review materials on current and relevant information on exertional heat illness, starting by October 1, 2022 and annually thereafter and
- a model exertional heat illness awareness plan, by January 1, 2022.

The bill also requires school boards to implement the plan using written materials, videos, or online or in-person training. Starting with the 2022-23 school year, the bill requires school boards to prohibit a student athlete from participating in intramural or interscholastic athletics unless the student and his or her parent or guardian reads or views the training materials or

attends an in-person training. The parent or guardian must sign an informed consent form acknowledging compliance with the requirement.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Nicole Klarides-Ditria, State Representative, 105th General Assembly District:

Representative Klarides-Ditria offers support for this legislation. As outlined in her testimony, this bill is an important proposal to require exertional heat illness education for coaches of interscholastic sports at schools that sponsor such sporting events and activities. As stated, "[h]ow many more young, capable students do we want to see on the evening news in the next few years that die from heat stroke because we could not act sooner on educating our Connecticut coaches?" With the summer heat just a few months away, there is a need to thoroughly educate our students, parents, and coaches to the best of our ability to ensure a safe sports season.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Laura Bozzi, PhD., Director of Programs, Yale Center on Climate Change and Health:

Dr. Bozzi offers written testimony in support of this bill. This bill takes an important step toward implementation of a recommendation by the Governor's Council on Climate Change. Youth are vulnerable to heat related illness, for reasons including their immature physiology and metabolism, and because they are often physically active outside. Importantly, this is a risk not only in hot weather Southern states, but also in Northern states, including Connecticut. Connecticut lacks heat modification policies for youth sports. and I respectfully request the committee's consideration of additional measures to be included to best protect children's health.

Christianne Eason, Vice President of Sport Safety, Korey Stringer Institute:

Christianne Eason offers support for this legislation. As told in the written testimony, Korey Stringer was an offensive lineman for the Minnesota Vikings who passed away from exertional heatstroke in August 2001. According to the National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research 2019 Annual Report, there were a total of 80 catastrophic injuries/illnesses from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 that were due to, or occurred during, sport-related activities, the majority (78%, n=62) were at the high school level.

While it is not possible to eliminate all catastrophic injuries/illnesses related to sport participation, there are numerous strategies that can be taken to optimize emergency preparedness to mitigate the risk. Coaches play an important role in helping prevent exertional heat illnesses because they can structure their practices and workouts in ways that can reduce risk. No requirements are currently in place for the education of exertional heat illness. Adopting this bill would help mitigate the risk of catastrophic illness and injuries by ensuring all interscholastic and intramural coaches in the state of Connecticut complete an exertional heat illness education program.

Additional Sources of Support:

Fred Balsamo, Manager-Coaching Education Program, CIAC
Joe Canzanella, Executive Director, CT High School Coaches Association
Glenn Lungarini, Executive Director, CAS-CIAC

Eric Hoppa, MD, Pediatric Emergency Medicine, CT Children's Medical Center

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None

Reported by: David Rackliffe

Date: April 7, 2021