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ATTENTION: All school health professionals

The SADS Foundation is alerting you to some possible causes of sudden unexplained death in young people: These are due to an abnormality of the heart's electrical system or of the heart muscle itself, that can cause sudden loss of consciousness, arrhythmia, and sudden death. These children usually appear healthy and, in most cases, the young person and her/his parents have absolutely no idea that something might be wrong. Once diagnosed, these conditions are treatable.

about sudden cardiac death in the young

- Each year in the United States, hundreds of young people die suddenly and unexpectedly due to cardiac arrhythmias.
- These conditions include Long QT Syndrome (LQTS), Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM), and others.
- LQTS is 3 times more common than childhood leukemia (ALL) in the US and occurs 1/3 as often as cystic fibrosis and twice as often as PKU.
- HCM is the most common cause of sudden cardiac death in people less than 35 years old and in young athletes.

We are asking you to add the following questions to your physical screening forms (or use the SADS form at www.sads.org/LQTS.html):

1. Have you ever fainted or blacked out or had a seizure during exercise?
2. Has anyone in your family ever died suddenly and unexpectedly of an unknown cause (or gone into cardiac arrest suddenly) at a young age?
3. Do you have consistent or unusual chest pain and/or shortness of breath during exercise?

If the respondent answers "yes" to any of these questions, the student should have a cardiac screening. If you do not know of any qualified physicians in your area that can screen for these conditions that can cause sudden death, the SADS Foundation has a referral list available of knowledgeable adult and pediatric cardiologists.

We are also asking you to be alert for any symptoms of these conditions (see screening) and to educate parents, teachers and coaches about the necessity to screen the child with symptoms. We are including a teacher packet and a coach packet for your information. If you would like more packets for your teachers and/or coaches, please let us know. We are also including a SADS poster and would be happy to send you more posters for all your schools (put in halls—for parents, in gyms, teachers lounges, school office, etc.) You may order more materials at <http://sads.org/lqtsmatlsrequest.html>

We will be happy to answer any questions you may have—thanks for your help!