



Contact:

Lisa Maher

Tel: 866.808.2873

Email: lmaher@childrenscardiomyopathy.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Legislation Introduced in House and Senate to Protect Youth Athletes from Cardiac Arrest

Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation Partners with Senator Robert Menendez and Representative Bill Pascrell on comprehensive sports bill

TENAFLY, N.J.—April 7, 2022— With the start of spring season sports, more focus is being placed on safety measures for practice and competitions. The Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation (CCF) partnered with U.S. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Representative Bill Pascrell (NJ-9) to reintroduce the ***Supporting Athletes, Families, and Educators to Protect the Lives of Athletic Youth (SAFE PLAY) Act***. The bill, which was introduced in the U.S. House and Senate, includes important provisions for protecting young athletes from sudden cardiac death commonly associated with cardiomyopathy.

According to a 2019 study by the National Athletic Trainer's Association, 75% of sports-related deaths in youth are cardiac related, and the majority of incidents occur during practice. Cardiomyopathy, a disease of the heart muscle, is a leading cause of sudden cardiac arrest in the young. Symptoms are not always present, and youth with an underlying heart condition that is not diagnosed may be at an increased risk.

The SAFE PLAY Act focuses on various sports safety issues, such as heat exposure, CPR and AED training, concussion response, and energy drink consumption. It also encourages best practices on preventing, documenting, and addressing cardiac emergencies, and includes provisions for educating parents, schools, and health professionals about higher risk heart conditions such as cardiomyopathy. The bill requests the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop and disseminate educational resources to encourage families to evaluate their cardiac health history, check for cardiomyopathy symptoms, and seek medical screening if necessary. Additionally, CDC would provide national data on how many student athletes are impacted by cardiomyopathy and other cardiac conditions. The bill also will provide state funding for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training and automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) in public schools, as well as set guidelines for emergency preparedness in case of an adverse cardiac event.

"Athletics are a key part of childhood and we want our children to participate in sports, compete, play and have fun, but we also want them to be safe," said Senator Menendez. "The SAFE PLAY Act will protect our kids and save lives by ensuring our schools have the resources and information they need to properly identify warning signs and respond in the event of a medical emergency during a game."

"As our understanding of sports-related injuries improves, so too must our response. Cardiac arrest, concussions, and heat exhaustion are just three of the many threats to our young athletes. It is on all of us to protect and preserve their health," said Rep. Pascrell

"The number of fatalities from cardiac arrest can be reduced if a potentially life-threatening heart condition, like cardiomyopathy, is detected early and treated appropriately. The SAFE PLAY Act addresses this very issue and includes preventive measures to safeguard at-risk children," said Lisa Yue, the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation's founder and president. Proper diagnosis and treatment for pediatric cardiomyopathy are priorities

for Ms. Yue, who lost two young children to the disease. "I am grateful we have congressional leaders like Senator Menendez working to prevent unnecessary deaths among young athletes on the playing field."

For parents who have experienced sudden cardiac arrest firsthand, emergency preparedness is key. Brian Leary, whose son Tyler went into sudden cardiac arrest supports the SAFEPLAY Act. "Tyler made a full recovery from the incident. This can be directly related to state legislation that required an AED on school premise and school personal who knew CPR and acted quickly that day to save his life," states Leary.

CCF encourages people to learn more about pediatric cardiomyopathy and take action on raising awareness of the disease. For more information, visit www.childrenscardiomyopathy.org or follow CCF on social media @CCFheartkids.

About the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation

The Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation (CCF) is a national organization focused on finding causes and cures for pediatric cardiomyopathy. The Foundation was established in 2002 to accelerate research and education, increase public awareness and advocacy, and offer support services to affected families. Since then, CCF has grown into a global community of families, physicians, and scientists, raising more than \$16.7 million in support of its mission.