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Parent Heart Watch is proud to join the National Athletic Trainers' Association and other key stakeholders in a call to action for improved early detection, prevention and emergency preparedness initiatives to protect young lives from sudden cardiac arrest and death in youth sports.

Undetected and unexpected, Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is claiming our youth. Cardiovascular disease is the second leading medical cause of death in children and adolescents in the United States.¹ Data estimates that 1 in 50 high schools has a SCA in a student on school grounds each year. Affected youth usually appear healthy and normal...until they have an arrest. The good news is that early detection is possible, heart conditions are treatable and young lives can be saved. Knowledge of the observations and actions that can make the difference between life and death are key to a successful outcome.

Early detection is crucial. Parent Heart Watch promotes the early detection of heart conditions in youth through heart screenings. Frequently, the warning signs and symptoms of a heart condition in youth go undetected. It is imperative that those who work and live with youth be aware of these signs and symptoms. If any exist, they should be reported to the youth's physician immediately. Moreover, healthcare providers must be more acutely aware of the warning signs & symptoms of a heart condition, utilize the American Academy of Pediatrics Pre-participation Physical Evaluation Form, utilize the Pediatric Sudden Cardiac Death Assessment Form, and, when symptomatic, immediately refer youth to a cardiologist for further evaluation.

Most occurrences of SCA in youth occur in public places. The increased availability of publicly accessible automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in schools and school-sponsored athletic events will dramatically increase the probability that youth and adults alike will survive a sudden cardiac arrest. Knowing and properly executing the critically time-urgent links of the Cardiac Chain-of-Survival can help save the life of someone in SCA.

Parent Heart Watch is the national voice solely dedicated to protecting youth from Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) and preventable Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD). Parent Heart Watch leads and empowers others by sharing information, educating and advocating for change.

For more information on SCA in youth, please visit our website www.parentheartwatch.org.

Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with the National Athletic Trainers' Association in this important endeavor to protect America's youth.

Sincerely,

Martha Lopez-Anderson
Chair, Board of Directors

¹ Center for Disease Control (CDC) National Vital Statistics Report for 2005, published April 2008, Volume 56, Number 10