



TO: Assembly Committee on Education
FROM: Anoop Singh, MD, Director of Cardiac Electrophysiology, & Kevin Walter, MD, Program Director, Sports Medicine, Children's Wisconsin
DATE: Tuesday, June 15, 2021
RE: AB 82 – Information about sudden cardiac arrest during youth athletic activities

Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share our testimony with you today. We are Dr. Anoop Singh, Director of Cardiac Electrophysiology, and Dr. Kevin Walter, Program Director of Sports Medicine – both practicing at Children's Wisconsin.

As the only independent children's hospital in the state, we are 100% dedicated solely to kids' health and well-being. As a nationally ranked hospital, we are proud of our excellent specialty care, including the care provided at the Herma Heart Institute at Children's Wisconsin. We care for patients with congenital heart disease from before birth through adulthood, and we consistently report some of the best surgical outcomes for even the most complex types of heart disease. We are proud to be known as innovators in the field as we continue to challenge the standard of care through new treatments, technologies and follow-up programs that are often adopted by other pediatric hospitals.

Additionally, we are home to Project ADAM, which began in 1999 after the death of Adam Lemel, a Whitefish Bay high school student who collapsed and died while playing basketball. Adam suffered sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) and tragically, no defibrillation or automated external defibrillator (AED) was available. Project ADAM works to provide schools and their staff with cardiac emergency training and AEDs to help prepare schools to protect our children and others in the school community. We have made great strides across Wisconsin and across the country, but we know more can be done to raise awareness and provide improved access to preventive training and resources. Our providers and staff, both inside and outside the hospital settings, are committed to improving outcomes for kids who suffer SCA and to help prevent tragedies like those experienced by both the Lemel and the Lermer families.

Education and awareness are critical to preventing many types of injuries. Helping ensure families have access to factual information and resources regarding SCA is an important and worthwhile effort. The proposed legislation requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to develop an information sheet for parents and caregivers of youth athletes on SCA and electrocardiogram (ECG) testing. We appreciate the amendment to ensure that current pediatric guidance and expertise is reflected in the information sheet through requiring DPI and the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) to consult with at least two pediatric cardiologists – one from each of the state's medical schools – in developing the information sheet. We believe this requirement will ensure the information sheet reflects evidence-based information that families and caregivers will find valuable.

We acknowledge the Lermer family's personal dedication and commitment to this important issue and thank them for carrying forward their son's legacy to improve the lives of others. We would like to thank Senator Darling and Representative Allen for their work on this important legislation and for their willingness to put forward the amendment to ensure that pediatric providers are able to share their expertise to inform the information sheet. Thank you.

Children's Wisconsin (Children's) serves children and families in every county across the state. We have inpatient hospitals in Milwaukee and the Fox Valley. We care for every part of a child's health, from critical care at one of our hospitals, to routine checkups in our primary care clinics. Children's also provides specialty care, urgent care, emergency care, dental care, school health nurses, foster care and adoption services, family resource centers, child health advocacy, health education, family preservation and support, mental health services, pediatric medical research and the statewide poison hotline.