



Proponent Testimony HB 437

Marie Schaefer, MD

Immediate Past President, The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio

November 19, 2025

Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 437.

On behalf of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio, which represents more than 7,500 physicians and medical students in our region, thank you for taking up this important issue of youth athlete safety. As a family medicine physician specializing in sports medicine, I know just how critical it is that we do everything in our power to keep student sports safe and healthy for all athletes.

Sports-related sudden cardiac arrest is a devastating event that, while rare, is the leading cause of death for young athletes. The underlying causes of sudden cardiac deaths vary, but nearly a third are attributed to hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. We are grateful that the language of this bill specifically requires that the screening tool it implements include questions related to this and other congenital conditions that are associated with higher risk of cardiac arrest. Specific, standard language will help to ensure that providers are asking the right questions to all students and families across the state, to hopefully make sure no child falls through the cracks. We are glad to see that the form that is developed will be based on the expert information from sports medicine and pediatric physician organizations.

Sports are an important part of youth development. They give our kids opportunities to be physically active, build confidence, practice teamwork, and come together with their community around shared efforts and aspirations. Sports are a force for good; it's crucial that we all work to ensure they are as free from risk and danger as possible. I strongly encourage you to support House Bill 437.