

## A Message to Amateur Sports Groups

### Sudden Cardiac Death in the Young Athlete

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), when it occurs in the young, is a devastating experience for the family, the community, and society as a whole. There are many possible causes for SCA in a young seemingly healthy child, teen, or young adult:

- inherited cardiac rhythm disorders
- structural cardiac defects
- a blow to the chest wall

Research suggests that over 600 Canadians under the age of 35 die each year from an undiagnosed cardiac rhythm disorder. ***At least 50% of those who died suddenly had symptoms prior to their deaths!***

Because physical activity is a common trigger for many of these deaths, it is important for members of sports communities to recognize possible symptoms.

#### **The Warning Signs**

- **Fainting (syncope) or seizure during physical activity.**
- **Fainting (syncope) or seizure resulting from emotional excitement, emotional distress or startle.**
- **Family history of unexpected sudden death during physical activity or during a seizure, or any other unexplained sudden death of an otherwise healthy young person.**

It is imperative that fainting episodes, or near faints (such as dizziness or light-headedness), be reported immediately to parents and treated as a significant “medical problem” until otherwise determined by a physician.

#### **A comprehensive Awareness Strategy should include:**

- Learning to recognize ***“The Warning Signs”***.
- Calling 911 for all fainting episodes.
- Considering implementation of a “Return To Play” policy whereby a physician’s approval is required before participation is resumed after an event of fainting.

For more information, please contact The Canadian SADS Foundation: [www.sads.ca](http://www.sads.ca) or email at [info@sads.ca](mailto:info@sads.ca) or call 905-826-6303 or toll free at 1-877-525-5995.