

# ARKANSAS CARDIOLOGY

A Department of



**Baptist Health**

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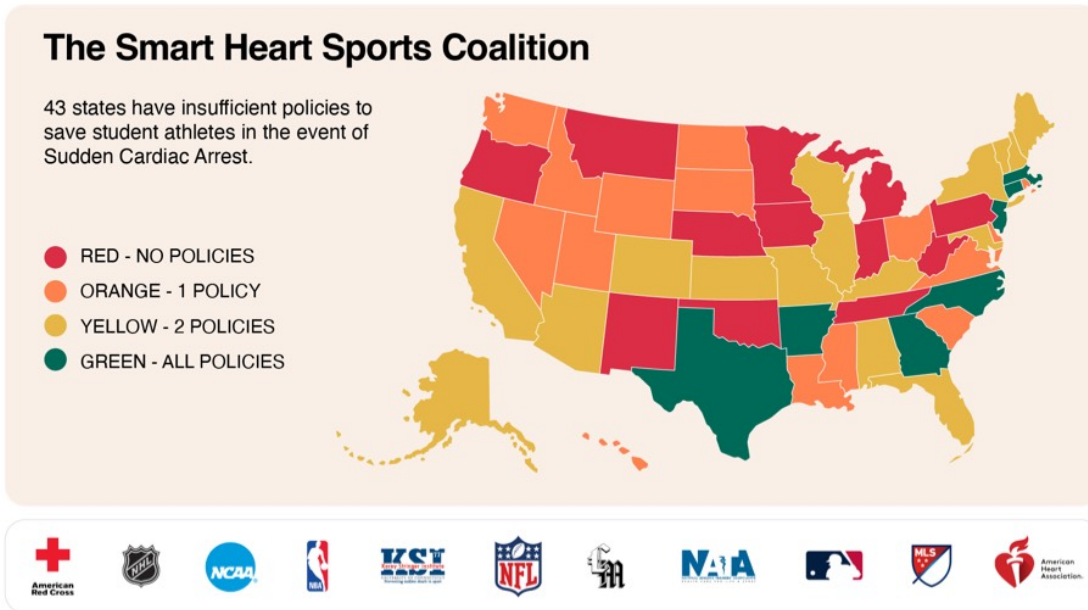
## Cardiac Care of Athletes in Arkansas

Recently, the American College of Cardiology (ACC) held a conference in Washington, D.C., entitled "Care of the Athletic Heart," focusing on the evaluation of athletes and active individuals with heart disease or symptoms of heart disease. Another major point of emphasis was on Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) to prevent death from sudden cardiac arrest among high school athletes.

In March, the National Football League (NFL), American Heart Association (AHA), and numerous sport and advocacy groups launched *The Smart Heart Sports Coalition*. In June, the ACC also joined this cause. The coalition advocates implementing three best practice policies to prevent death from sudden cardiac arrest.

1. Emergency Action Plans for each high school athletic venue that are widely distributed, posted, rehearsed, and updated annually;
2. Clearly marked automated external defibrillator (AEDs) at each athletic venue or within 1-3 minutes of each venue where high school practices or competitions are held; and,
3. CPR and AED education for coaches.

At present, only seven states have implemented all three best practices. This graphic, prominently displayed at the conference, highlighted Arkansas as one of them.



This was accomplished through the hard work of numerous institutions and individuals in our state, especially the local chapter of the AHA and our state legislature.

This Arkansan sat a little taller, and I was extremely proud of my home state.

Arkansas<sup>1</sup>  
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I wanted to relay this information and express gratitude for your commitment to improving the health and safety of athletes in Arkansas. Sudden cardiac death in athletes has long been a rare but tragic reality. Recent high-profile cases, e.g. Damar Hamlin, Bronny James, continue to attract national media attention. The importance of adopting these potentially life-saving measures and emphasizing EAPs at all levels shows a commitment to our student athletes at all levels by parents, medical personnel, and local and state leaders.

At Arkansas Cardiology in North Little Rock, Dr Charles Caldwell and I are launching an Exercise and Sports Cardiology Clinic within our existing practice. We will focus on the cardiovascular needs of active individuals and athletes from high school to masters athletes, recreational to competitive athletes; as well as tactical athletes, which includes firefighters, police, and military members. To our knowledge, this will be the only Exercise and Sports Cardiology Clinic in central Arkansas.

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