

School District Letterhead

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

XXXXXXX School District Introduces Pilot Program on Long QT Syndrome Awareness

***One of the first school districts in the state to generate
awareness about this potential killer of young people.***

CITY, STATE -- XXXXXX School District announced a pilot program today to create better awareness about Long QT Syndrome with parents and guardians, school nurses, teachers, and athletic coaches. In conjunction with the Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndrome (SADS) Foundation (Salt Lake City, Utah), the school district is working to also encourage better awareness in the medical and general community.

According to Superintendent of Schools XXXXXXXX, "As a caring, health oriented school district, we are taking the lead in helping to create better awareness about and recognition of Long QT Syndrome with parents and guardians, our staff, the local medical community, and the community at large. We are doing this because Long QT is a heart arrhythmia that can result in a young person's sudden death."

It is appropriate that XXXXXXXX School District has embarked on Long QT awareness. Long QT affects more children than childhood leukemia; it has been estimated that 250 to 600 young people die each month in the US due to Long QT. Many states have implemented Long QT Awareness Weeks and September is National Long QT Awareness Month. .

XXXXXXX School District's Pilot Program

There are three areas that have been targeted:

- School nurses, teachers, athletic coaches, and other staff
- Parents and guardians
- The general community including physicians and pediatricians

1. Informational letter to all parents and guardians The purpose is to provide information to better acquaint parents with Long QT Syndrome. The communication provides information about Long QT. We have developed questions in conjunction with the Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndrome (SADS) Foundation that parents can consider and discuss with their family physician regarding Long QT as appropriate to their child's situation.

2. Increasing our school nurses' and teachers' awareness – by providing information about Long QT Syndrome. By making our staff more aware that this syndrome exists and its possible consequences, we hope to sensitize the staff to anything they might observe in a similar way that they might be sensitive to other conditions that affect student health and learning.

3. Working with the local media, – to increase awareness in the community about Long QT Syndrome and to publicize the steps XXXXX School District is taking on this issue.

[add any appropriate statement about AEDs in school buildings, in local police vehicles, about CPR training for staff and students, if appropriate, etc.]

About Long QT Syndrome (LQTS)

- LQTS is a disturbance of the heart's electrical system causing an abnormality of the heartbeat or rhythm of the heart.
- Because of this abnormality, affected people are vulnerable to sudden fainting (syncope) and even death.
- Unfortunately, many times the cause of the syncope is overlooked and Long QT Syndrome is not considered.
- Most often these events occur during physical exertion or emotional stress. In some they occur during sleep.

- Fortunately, most of these deaths are preventable if the condition is recognized and treated.

The Symptoms Can Include

- Fainting episodes (syncope) during or immediately after physical activity
 - Fainting as a result of emotional excitement/distress/startle
 - Family history of unexplained death below age 40
- ... although many times there are no obvious symptoms

How Is It Diagnosed?

The diagnosis is made from an ECG (also known as an EKG) that has been read by a physician, not by the machine itself. Usually a series of ECGs will enable a doctor to diagnose LQTS. In some cases, an exercise ECG or event monitor will clarify the diagnosis.

How Is It Treated?

Treatment can be very effective in the vast majority of patients. Medications called beta-blockers are effective in about 90% of patients.

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Press contact:
[Name and telephone number]