Frequently Asked Questions

Louisiana Pediatric Cardiology Foundation

1. **When and where will the screening take place?**
   Screens take place either on school campuses or at our satellite office, Pediatric Cardiology Associates. Please call our office at 225-768-2590 to check for available time slots and reserve your appointment.

2. **What do I need to do for my child to get screened?**
   A parent/guardian of the student will sign an "Informed Consent and Release" form, along with some demographic information and a short medical history questionnaire that we will provide for you. If possible, please have the form filled out prior to your arrival in order to expedite the check-in process.

3. **What tests will be run?**
   - 12 lead electrocardiogram (EKG)
   - Limited echocardiogram (ECHO) to assess heart size and for normal aortic valve

   *There will be no needles, blood work, radiation exposure, or sedation.

4. **How long with the screen take?**
   The screen is approximately 15-20 minutes. Unforeseen problems may occur, so please be patient if the screening process runs longer than the estimated time.

5. **What is the cost?**
   There is no cost to the student. The value of this test is approximately $150 - $200/student and would cost upwards of $640 if scheduled through your doctor's office and not going through insurance. LPCF is able to provide these screens free of charge through donations, fundraising, and outside grants.

6. **What if I want to pay or make a donation to help defer costs?**
   You can make a tax deductible donation to Louisiana Pediatric Cardiology Foundation (LPCF). The foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) public charity whose mission is to award grants to families in Louisiana to help ease the financial burden of out-of-pocket travel expenses when their children are undergoing life-saving heart surgeries and also to provide free heart screens in an effort to detect various cardiac abnormalities in high school athletes, namely, Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, which is the leading cause of sudden cardiac death in young athletes.

7. **What is Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM)?**
   Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM) is a genetic heart condition that causes a thickening of the heart wall, leading to the obstruction of blood flow and erratic heart beat. It is the leading cause of sudden death in young people.

8. **What are common symptoms of Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM)?**
   Not all patients will necessarily experience symptoms of HCM. However, some of the symptoms associated with HCM may include chest pain, fatigue, dizziness, heart palpitations, lightheadedness, fainting (especially after exercise), or shortness of breath.

9. **How can Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy be detected?**
   Initial signs of HCM can be detected through an electrocardiogram (EKG). The diagnosis can also be made by utilizing an echocardiogram (ECHO), which is an ultrasound of the heart.

10. **What is an electrocardiogram (EKG)?**
    An EKG is a test that measures the electrical activity of the heartbeat. With each beat, an electrical impulse (or "wave") travels through the heart, causing the muscle to squeeze and pump blood from the heart. The EKG displays the amount of time it takes the wave to travel from one part of the heart to the

next, showing if the electrical activity is normal or slow, fast or irregular. The EKG can also determine if parts of the heart are too large or are being overworked.

11. What is an echocardiogram (ECHO)?

An ECHO is a technique that sends sound waves (like sonar) into the chest to rebound from the heart's walls and valves. The recorded waves show the shape, texture, and movement of the valves. The ECHO also shows the size of the heart chambers and how well they are working.

12. When do I get my results?

A pediatric cardiologist will read every test the week following the screens. All NORMAL test results will be mailed to the patient's family. If the test results happen to be ABNORMAL, we will communicate the results to the primary care physician indicated on the history form and the parent/guardian of the student directly to discuss necessary follow-up. Please allow 2-3 weeks to receive the NORMAL letters.

13. What is the likelihood my child has the most common cause of sudden cardiac death?

The frequency of Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy ranges from 1:500 to as rare as 1:5000. We expect to identify one child per 1000 screened.

14. Will my child's school or coach get a copy of the results?

No. Your privacy is protected in the same way as if you were seeing a physician for a typical appointment.

15. What does it mean to have an ABNORMAL screen?

If your child has an ABNORMAL screen, you will work with your primary care physician on a plan of care. Many students ultimately are cleared.

16. What does a NORMAL screen mean? Does it mean my child has no risk for any cardiac issues?

A NORMAL screen rules out over 65% of the cardiac causes of sudden cardiac death. The screen does not completely rule out all causes, but does focus on the most common.

17. Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

If you have any questions, please feel free to call our office at 225-768-2590.

Our foundation address is:

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Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Our website is:
www.lpcf.com