



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LANSING

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## **MDHHS awards 312 schools MI HEARTSafe designation**

*Record numbers for both first-time and total awardees*

LANSING, Mich. – For more than a decade, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Michigan Department of Education (MDE), American Heart Association, Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) and Michigan Alliance for Prevention of Sudden Cardiac Death of the Young (MAP-SCDY) have awarded the MI HEARTSafe designation to schools that have taken the appropriate steps to prepare for cardiac emergencies. These schools will be recognized at an in-person and virtual ceremony at MHSAA in East Lansing, Tuesday, Nov. 12.

Since the program began in 2013, 994 schools have earned this honor. This year, a record-breaking 312 schools are being recognized for their work during the 2023-2024 school year, with 158 schools receiving the award for the first time. These are the most designations in the program's history. A total of 761 schools are actively designated as MI HEARTSafe.

“Being prepared to respond to a cardiac emergency can help decrease incidences of sudden cardiac death among Michigan youth,” said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. “As new laws seek to enhance the ability of Michigan schools to respond to cardiac emergencies, the safety and health of our students continues to be a priority across the state.”

House Bills [5527](#) and [5528](#), which were passed and signed into law this year, establish comprehensive safety requirements for schools that include cardiac emergency response plans.

To receive a MI HEARTSafe School designation, schools must have:

- A written cardiac emergency response plan and team that can respond to an emergency during school hours and after-school activities and sports.
- Current CPR/AED certification of at least 10% of staff and 50% of coaches, including 100% of head coaches and physical education staff.
- Accessible, properly maintained and inspected AEDs with signs identifying locations.
- Annual cardiac emergency response drills.

- Pre-participation sports screening of all student athletes using the current physical and history form endorsed by MHSAA.

“Improving the health, safety, and wellness of all learners is one of the goals in [Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan](#),” said State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice. “We are proud to support Michigan’s HEARTSafe schools. Children are safer as a result of a record number of Michigan schools preparing for a cardiac emergency.”

Achieving and maintaining the HEARTSafe designation continues to be vital for maintaining a safe environment for Michigan schools. Resources to help meet the criteria are available on the [MI HEARTSafe School website](#). In January 2025, MAP-SCDY will host a virtual workshop to educate schools on the steps to take to become MI HEARTSafe and receive a designation. Continuing education credits for nurses and school staff will be available.

A list of [participating schools is available online](#).

For more information about the MI HEARTSafe Schools program, visit [Migrc.org/miheartsafe](http://Migrc.org/miheartsafe) or email [mdhhs-mi-heartsafe@michigan.gov](mailto:mdhhs-mi-heartsafe@michigan.gov).

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*Media interested in attending this event virtually or in person should contact [Laina Stebbins](#).*