

Background and Context

The Zac Mago Foundation was founded after the death of Zac Mago, a 17-year-old Indiana high school student and athlete who died suddenly from an undiagnosed enlarged heart in 2018. The foundation's mission is to raise awareness and provide preventative screenings to detect conditions that can cause SCA in young people.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest is the leading cause of death in student athletes and one of the top causes of death in people under age 25. Nationally, SCA claims the lives of approximately 7,000 to 10,000 youth each year. Many of these deaths occur with no prior warning symptoms, and the majority are linked to undiagnosed heart conditions that can often be detected with simple, non-invasive screenings such as an ECG or Echo.

By offering monthly screenings, the Porter County Health Department and the Zac Mago Foundation are creating consistent and accessible opportunities for families to identify hidden cardiac conditions before a tragedy occurs. In addition, the inclusion of CPR and AED training ensures that our community is better prepared to respond if an SCA does happen, improving survival rates.

Summary of Proposal

This document outlines an agreement for monthly heart screenings in Porter County. The collaboration leverages the Health Department's commitment to reach our Heart Safe Community Status, and the Zac Mago Foundation's mission to prevent Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) in our community.

Core services:

- **Cardiac heart screenings:** These will be offered to children and young adults aged 10–25 years old.
- **Preventative testing:** The screenings will include blood pressure, height, weight, an Electrocardiogram (ECG), and an Echocardiogram (Echo).

- **CPR and AED training:** Hands-only CPR and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training will also be provided.

Operational details:

- **Location:** Screenings will be held at the Porter County Health Department.
- **Timing:** Events are scheduled after hours, from 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., once a month on the same day (e.g., the first Thursday of every month).
- **Access:** Patients will enter and exit the building via the glass doors on Napoleon Street.
- **Staffing:** The Zac Mago Foundation will provide Echo Technicians. The Porter County Health Department will provide nursing staff.

Financial and community aspects:

- **Cost of screening:** Patients will pay a \$25 fee, which may change annually. This fee is determined by the Zac Mago Foundation.
- **No cost to Health Department:** The Zac Mago Foundation is waiving its \$500 fee, so the Porter County Health Department will incur no cost.
- **Hardship assistance:** The foundation offers hardship forms that waive the screening fee for those who are unable to pay, with need determined by the foundation.
- **Shared goal:** Prevention of Sudden Cardiac Arrest in Porter County.

Projected Community Impact

- **Screening Reach:** With monthly events serving approximately 40–50 participants, an estimated 500–600 Porter County youth and young adults could be screened each year.

- **Detection of Hidden Conditions:** National data suggests that 1 in 300 youth screened will be identified with a serious cardiac condition that could lead to SCA. Based on that rate, these screenings may identify and protect 1–2 Porter County youth each year from a potentially life-threatening heart condition.
- **Preparedness Training:** Each monthly event will also provide CPR and AED training to participants and their families. Over the course of a year, this could result in more than 500 individuals in our community being trained in lifesaving response skills.
- **Long-Term Benefits:** By establishing a consistent and sustainable screening program, Porter County has the opportunity to reduce the risk of youth cardiac deaths, build awareness among families, and strengthen community resilience in responding to cardiac emergencies.

Moving Forward

This proposal builds on the established relationship between the Porter County Health Department and the Zac Mago Foundation, moving the screenings to a fixed, monthly location to increase accessibility. With no cost to the Health Department, affordable screening fees, and hardship waivers available, this partnership directly supports prevention, education, and lifesaving preparedness for Porter County youth and families.