

Memo: Updated Guidance on Sports Physical Exams during COVID

Special Olympics



DATE: November 2020
FROM: Mary Davis, CEO
TO: Regional Presidents and Managing Directors
RE: **Updated Memo on Medical Form Extensions during COVID-19 Pandemic**
CC: Regional Communication Directors; Alicia Bazzano; John Dow; Angela Ciccolo; Jason Teitler, Peyton Purcell

This is an update and follow-up to the memo provide to all Regions in June 2020. At this time, Special Olympics Inc.(SOI) recommends that Programs may continue to offer a one-time 6-month extension to those athletes who have expiring medicals and are unable to obtain a new sports physical exam prior to the expiration of the previous medical form **until there is no active community transmission of COVID in their local area**. To ensure that the period between physical exams does not extend too far for the safety of the athletes, athletes that were previously granted a 6-month extension should not be offered a second extension and should submit a medical form and sports physical clearance prior to resuming activities.

The guidance remains from the previous memo that an extension should NOT be offered to any athlete that self-reports they:

- 1) Have had any major changes in their health status since their last valid Special Olympics PPE was completed.
- 2) Have been infected with the COVID-19 virus (as this would require medical clearance)
- 3) Experience any of the following symptoms at rest or during exercise: difficulty breathing, chest pain, shortness of breath, loss of consciousness, lightheadedness, dizziness, visual changes, headache, cough, skipped heartbeats, irregular heartbeat or any other unpleasant physical symptoms.

If an existing athlete was diagnosed as COVID-positive and/or has had a change in cardiac, neurological, or respiratory conditions since their last exam, they must receive a full clearance before participation is permitted.

Continuing from the previous policy, if the athlete is new to Special Olympics, and had never previously submitted a medical form, they must receive a pre-participation physical exam before in-person sports activities.

In addition, Special Olympics has the following guidance for participation in virtual competitions:

- If an athlete is already registered for Special Olympics, they should have a valid physical on file and would be subject to the extension requirements for current medicals
- If the participant is not registered as an athlete then they should sign the waiver because they do not have a physical. Certainly if the individual is going to continue to participate, efforts should be made to sign them up as an athlete with all the necessary requirements including a physical and they must have a sports physical exam and clearance prior to beginning in-person activities.

Thank you for your continued attention and hard work to ensure the health and safety of our athletes and all members of our movement during this challenging period.

With Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Davis', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Mary Davis, Chief Executive Officer
Special Olympics, Inc.