



Why will there be a requirement for an annual health history renewal?

The new requirement eliminates a major barrier: requiring a licensed medical practitioner's physical examination and signature. At the same time, the new registration form benefits Programs by providing more current information about athletes across all categories and benefits athletes by providing the most current health information in support of their overall participation. Many of our athletes have changes in their health and medications annually and it is in their best interest – and ours – to have updated information.

If no medical practitioner's signature is needed at the Program level, will a medical practitioner's signature be required for USA, Regional, or World Games? (NOTE: All references to Regional Games in this document refer to SONA-level events.)

Yes, a medical practitioner will need to complete the medical form for athletes competing above the Program level, such as a USA, Regional, and World Games.

Who needs to complete an Athlete Medical Form for a Regional or World Games?

All registered Special Olympics athletes and Unified partners must complete a Games Athlete Medical form within 12 months of the end date of the Games they will be participating in. This form includes a medical examination that must be conducted by a licensed medical practitioner.

What happens to recently renewed Athlete Medical Forms that are considered current under the old process?

Medical forms completed prior to the implementation of the new registration process should be honored for three years from submission, or the expiration date of the previous form, whichever comes first.

What are the Athlete Registration Form requirements for sports participants in schools and community partner programs? (i.e., Unified Champion Schools, colleges, Parks & Recreation, Boys & Girls Clubs)

For activities and competitions that are operated by the school or partner organization, the Athlete Registration Form is encouraged, but not required. The Special Olympics Athlete Registration Form and annual renewal policy is required for participation in activities and competitions that are operated by a Special Olympics Program. In other words, the Athlete Registration Form is required for participants from schools and community organizations that attend competitions operated by Special Olympics.

Are there certain responses to the health history or medication in the new Athlete Registration Form that would require the Program to recommend further attention prior to participation, including the completion of the Athlete Medical Form by a medical practitioner?

For health and safety reasons, Programs, coaches and medical staff may advise an athlete to consult a physician before pursuing participation based on the information reported on the Athlete Registration Form.

If a Program decides to continue with a medical practitioner's signature during athlete registration, would the medical form be valid for 3 years and will annual updates to health history be required?

Yes, a signature from a medical practitioner is valid for three years. Programs will need to collect an annual registration renewal form for all athletes.



What is the potential impact on MedFest? How will MedFest be marketed moving forward?

Even though Special Olympics will not require a licensed medical practitioner's signature to participate, an annual physical exam is strongly encouraged to promote overall athlete health. MedFest will remain as a program aimed at providing athletes the opportunity to see a physician as well as an opportunity to train physicians to care for individuals with IDD.

Will there continue to be a supplemental form for athletes with Atlantoaxial Instability?

Language specific for athletes with Atlantoaxial Instability has been added to the waiver section of the registration form.

Will athletes need a new medical form filled out for every SONA regional event or will the medical part be good for 3 years?

Medical forms for USA, Regional and World Games will be valid for three years.

Will Programs be given a list of what is acceptable for an electronic signature? If they are Adobe-friendly does that allow us to use Adobe Pro to fill in a digital signature or are Programs required to use a different platform?

Adobe and DocuSign are both recommended e-sign solutions. Our current recommendation is Adobe based on costs and compatibility within the movement.

Is there a mandatory "switch-over" or implementation timeframe?

It is expected that all Programs will adopt the new process by January 1, 2026. If a Program decides to continue with a signature from a medical practitioner, the annual Athlete Registration Renewal Form will still be required.

With the removal of a licensed medical practitioner's signature prior to participation, what guidance can Programs have when reviewing registration forms to ensure athletes' safe participation?

A two-tiered flagging system has been developed to ensure athletes who do need a licensed medical practitioner's clearance receive one and coaches are aware of lower tiered health conditions prior to and athlete starting training.

The level 1 flags that require a licensed medical practitioner's review are as follows:

- If an athlete indicates that they have had a concussion within one calendar month prior to form completion.
- If an athlete has been limited in participation by a licensed medical practitioner unless proof of medical clearance can be provided.

The level 2 flags do not require a licensed medical practitioner's review, but Programs should ensure that necessary support staff, like coaches, are aware of the condition. The level 2 flags are as follows:

- Heart Condition
- Asthma
- Diabetes requiring insulin
- Epilepsy/Seizure disorder
- Sickle Cell
- Bleeding disorder
- Allergy requiring an EpiPen



- Behavioral health or Sensory disorder
- Vision or hearing impairment

Is there a template for an athlete support action plan?

Yes, Programs can use the [template](#) provided by Special Olympics Health. This template is not mandatory.

What resources are available to coaches to better understand the conditions outlined in the level 2 flags?

The [SO Learning Portal](#) has a training course in the Sports and Games section titled “[Understanding Athlete Registration and Medical Forms Course for Coaches](#)”. This course will educate coaches on understanding the three forms (registration, renewal and medical), what they need to know as a coach when looking at the forms and managing common health conditions (to include level 2 flags). At the end of this course the coach is provided the athlete support plan template.

Is there a deadline to implement the two-tiered medical review process?

Programs should implement the two-tiered medical review process by January 1, 2026.

Why is a medical review process being implemented?

A medical review process was created by the Special Olympics International Health team in collaboration with the Medical Advisory Committee to provide clear and standard guidance across all Programs globally to ensure the safe participation of athletes. It was necessary to ensure a universal standard by which Program staff reviewed registration forms and applied secondary courses of action based on medical guidance.

The level 1 flag indicates that a participant does not need a medical practitioner’s review if they have been limited in participation but can provide proof of past medical clearance. What are some examples of proof of medical clearance?

Examples of proof of clearance can be provided through several mechanisms such as note from the athlete’s physician or completed Special Olympics medical form.

Can Programs ask or include additional question on the registration or renewal forms?

Yes, a Program can certainly add in additional questions to the registration and/or renewal forms. The forms, as posted in the [Special Olympics Resources Page](#) are the minimum mandatory requirements for registration.