



## **Ohio Athletic Trainers' Association**

### **HB 47 (Bird, Brown) AED**

#### **Proponent Testimony**

**March 21, 2023**

Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross and Ranking Minority Member Somani, my name is Gerry Rishel and I am a retired licensed athletic trainer (AT), having served over 40 years as an AT in Northeast Ohio with experience in the high school, collegiate, and professional settings. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony today on behalf of the Ohio Athletic Trainers' Association (OATA). I am currently the VP of Government Affairs for the OATA, which is the statewide trade association representing the over 2000 licensed athletic trainers in the state of Ohio.

Sudden cardiac death is the leading cause of death in sport, and according to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, 70-90% of those individuals will die before reaching the hospital. The ones that are lucky enough to reach the hospital and survive cardiac arrest are likely to suffer with from injury to the brain, nervous system or other physical ailments. However, those that have access to CPR and AEDs are more likely to survive with less physical ailments. In fact, we experienced this very recently during the Cincinnati Bengals game when Buffalo Bills player Damar Hamlin had a sudden cardiac arrest on the field. The athletic trainer for the Buffalo Bills provided immediate CPR and had access to an AED. Dr. Allen Sills, the Chief Medical Officer of the NFL was quoted as saying, "...the key in any type of sudden cardiac event is the rapid response of trained personnel. And so I think the important lesson that we can all take away from this is, really for every sport at every level, preparation for a sudden cardiac event, making sure that people have training in basic life supports, that AEDs are available. That is a very, very key message, and something we can all learn from."

While NFL teams have on average access to four athletic trainers, two primary-care physicians, two orthopedists and one chiropractor available at each game, we recognize that level of access to health care professionals is not the reality for our secondary and youth sports organizations. However, we can make sure that our schools have access to AEDs, along with the proper training and guidance on how to utilize an AED.

The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), has a partnership with the Korey Stringer Institute (KSI), which was founded by the wife of Korey Stringer, the Minnesota Vikings offensive lineman, who passed away from exertional heat stroke in 2001. Last May the OATA participated in KSI's Team Up for Sports Safety Initiative hosted at FirstEnergy Stadium, home of the Cleveland Browns. One of the most important initiatives for KSI is to advance public

policies that prevent sudden death in sports. During the meeting we discussed the current situation in Ohio, recognizing that there are a large majority of schools with AEDs. However, it was eye opening to hear from the participants some of their experiences with AEDs, including a lack of access due to them being locked in an administrator's office, or unable to access it during after school hours, or schools placing the AED far away from the gymnasium. As we know, seconds matter in a cardiac emergency, so it is critical that the AEDs be available, but it is also important to also provide the best practices for the schools to maximize the success rate in the time of an emergency.

The OATA believes HB 47 as introduced is a very worthwhile policy change for the safety of Ohio's students, school employees and families

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am available to answer any questions at this time.