



Dear Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the Health Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Community Heart Watch in strong support of HB 47 to require AEDs and cardiac emergency preparedness and training in schools and athletic venues in Ohio. Community Heart Watch is a collaboration of first responders, healthcare providers, educators and civic leaders in Fairfield, Hocking and Perry counties. For the past 14 years, we have been dedicated to improving cardiac arrest survival -- we have trained over 20,000 people in CPR, placed over 400 AEDs in the community and accredited over 60 schools and businesses as Heart Safe.

We do this because cardiac arrest is deadly, with less than 10% survival on average. However, when bystanders start CPR and use an AED, survival can be as high as 80%.

Not only is cardiac arrest deadly, it is prevalent – in Fairfield County alone, EMS attempt to resuscitate over 10 cardiac arrests every month and even more people die before EMS arrive.

Cardiac arrest is also indiscriminate – it strikes people of all ages, race, ethnicity and income levels. It also strikes otherwise healthy people – including professional athletes, marathon runners and children.

We support HB 47 because we have seen first-hand that bystander CPR and AED use in schools, athletic venues and parks save lives. Here are a few examples in our local community:

- Just three weeks ago on Nov 17, a sixth grade girl suffered a cardiac arrest at a dance at Liberty Union Middle School in Baltimore. One of the chaperones started CPR and used the school's AED to save her life.
- 11 year-old Connor Davis suffered a cardiac arrest when walking on the track at the Chieftain Center in Logan before baseball practice. Two bystanders started CPR and saved Connor's life.
- 17-year old Hayden Vorhis was in class at Stanberry Career Center in Lancaster when he experienced a cardiac arrest. Having gone through "Heart Safe School" training, staff started CPR immediately and used an AED to save Hayden's life.
- 16-year-old Andrew was running with his class in Lancaster when he collapsed. Having been trained in CPR and AED use only weeks before, fellow students started CPR and used an AED to save Andrew's life.
- 79-year-old Darlene collapsed in the bleachers at a volleyball tournament at Lancaster High School. As a Heart Safe school, staff started CPR immediately and used an AED to save Darlene's life.
- 49-year old John suffered a cardiac arrest while hiking at Old Man's Cave in Hocking Hills. Bystanders performed CPR and a park ranger used an AED. It took EMS 20 minutes to arrive on scene, so John would not have survived without CPR and an AED.

We are grateful to have exceptional and highly dedicated EMS in our community. We have skilled physicians, surgeons, nurses and health care workers. And we have state-of-the art technology and equipment in our hospitals. But none of that matters if there isn't a viable patient to work on. CPR and AEDs save lives. Period.

We are hopeful this legislation will pass to ensure training and access to AEDs that give our students, athletes and residents their best chance of survival when cardiac arrest strikes.

Sincerely,

Teri K Watson, PhD
Chair, Community Heart Watch / Community Outreach Coordinator, Fairfield Medical Center Lancaster Ohio