



November 20, 2023

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

We often take for granted our most trusted ally, our heart, which beats around 1,500 beats in a day, 45,000 beats in a month and 530,000 beats in a year. But when it stops, the chance of survival is nearly zero without a hero stepping in to provide CPR and use an AED in the critical first minutes following a cardiac arrest. Without intervention, brain damage begins in 4 minutes and death occurs around 10 minutes. With an average EMS response time of 7-8 minutes and even longer in rural areas, having community members trained in how to respond to a cardiac emergency and having ready access to an AED is the victim's best chance of survival.

As an interventional cardiologist at Fairfield Medical Center and clinical co-chair of Community Heart Watch, I would like to voice strong support for HB 47 to require AEDs, CPR and AED training and cardiac emergency response preparation in schools and athletic venues. These measures will strengthen the first three links in the chain of survival – namely early recognition of cardiac arrest and activation of EMS, early CPR and rapid defibrillation. These three links serve to keep patients alive and neurologically intact until EMS can arrive to provide the fourth link -- advanced life support and then transport to a hospital for integrated post cardiac arrest care.

A few weeks ago, the vital importance of CPR and early use of an AED was demonstrated when a 10 year old girl suffered cardiac arrest during a dance at a middle school in our local community. A chaperone did CPR and used an AED to revive her. She was taken by Basil Joint fire and transferred to Nationwide Children's hospital and has since returned home.

Requiring AEDs and emergency response training in schools and athletic venues will go a long way in empowering school staff, coaches and the community to provide life-saving care while waiting for EMS. Each life saved carries a ripple effect in the lives they touch and echoes the immense power of training combined with access to AEDs.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

John Lazarus, MD, PhD

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