



Sarah McGraw-Thimmes  
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Dear Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for House bill 47, particularly the requirement of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in schools and municipal sports and recreation locations. According to the American College of Cardiology (2017),

- One in twenty five high schools in the United States can expect a Sudden Cardiac Arrest event each year
- The survival rate of students in schools with AEDs is approximately 70%, compared with only 8% in the overall population of school-age children

Therefore, it is not **IF** a Cardiac Arrest is going to happen in our schools, but rather **WHEN** a Cardiac Arrest will occur. Lancaster City Schools has been committed to preparing for a cardiac emergency and has achieved Heart Safe Schools Accreditation since 2012. An important part of the accreditation process is teaching both students and staff hands only CPR and how to use an AED. We start this training in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and then again in junior high, and it is now a graduation requirement for high school. We also perform a minimum of 3 cardiac emergency drills each school year. Schools are mandated to perform tornado, fire and lock down drills, all of which are extremely important, but the data illustrates that a sudden cardiac arrest is more probable to occur.

Lancaster City Schools currently has 48 AED's in the school district including 8 AEDs at various athletic fields. We are also working to place AEDs outside of each building for members of the community who use the school grounds after hours.

Does this preparation make a difference? Our experience is a resounding yes. Since we initiated the heart safe accreditation eleven years ago, we have had 3 cardiac arrest events in our schools. In all three incidents, students and staff took immediate action to call 911, start CPR and use an AED. I am proud to report that all three victims survived. They survived because students and staff had the confidence to take action.

It's also important to note that many of our students have used the training they received in school to assist a family member with a cardiac arrest at home. It's a ripple effect, training students and staff not only helps people in a school, but also in the community.

I can't promise that every person who has cardiac arrest will survive; but what I can say is that our students and staff have the knowledge, confidence, and necessary equipment to take action during a medical emergency. They are able

to give the victim of a medical emergency their best chance at survival. HB 47 will help ensure all schools in Ohio are equally prepared to respond when a cardiac emergency occurs.

Sincerely,

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District Health Coordinator  
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School Chair, Community Heart Watch