

TO: Public Health Committee
FROM: Robert W. Huebner, Wallingford, Connecticut
SUBJECT: American Heart Association Instructor BLS, First Aid, and HealthCare
Senate Bill 1339 – An Act Concerning Automatic External Defibrillators
DATE: March 5, 2007

I feel very strongly that this bill needs to be passed to require that each school and public building have at least one automatic external defibrillator on its premises, and to provide immunity from liability to any person or entity that owns an automatic external defibrillator used to render emergency care.

As a Volunteer Firefighter and EMT in 2006 both the AHA and Red Cross have awarded me for assisting in saving a Cardiac Arrest victim. Unfortunately I have had more people die than I have saved. I have been on emergency scenes on several occasions where we are too late to save a life because there was not an AED present for bystanders to use.

As good as our EMS services are, there are too many variables and too short of a time frame to rely strictly on an AED being brought to the victim by EMS.

For Cardiac arrest, statistics show that to be effective, the shock needs to be delivered no more than 10 minutes. That is from the time the person's heart stops to the shock, not from the time the caller makes the call to 911. That is usually 3 min+ from the person dropping to the floor. So unless the emergency crew is very close it takes too long to meet that critical time.

The answer is to mandate that public buildings and schools have these proven lifesaving units available for bystanders to use. This has been done on all aircraft, at airports and bus stations and at various locations in major cities with great results.

AEDs are no different than a fire extinguisher. If they were not required by law, few would have them. Because fire extinguishers are mandated, they have been proven effective and are now just a fact of doing business.

Everybody likes to use the phrase "you can't put a price on a human life", but by not having AEDs available due to budget constraints, we are doing just that. If it was you or a loved one, would you tolerate the statement "we did not have an AED because they cost too much"?

When it comes to schools, people say that not many young people experience cardiac arrest. More than 3,000 young people a year suffer a cardiac arrest, which is about the same number that died during 9/11. Our country has been at war because of that ever since. So should we not do everything in our power to be at war with this physical terrorist called cardiac arrest?

Schools are our neighborhood social hubs, with adults (teachers from 23 yr to 65yr of age) to after hours activities. Some schools are also used as polling places, which draw many people of all ages to the school building. This is no different than a small airport, where AEDs are mandated!

If everyone here could know the feeling when that cardiac arrest 911 call comes in to the firehouse and knowing as you hurry it is most likely too late, you would know why EMS staff support having AEDs in public places.

Why? do the math. This is if everything goes right!

- 3 min from heart stopping to someone making the call to 911 (with the right assessment)
- 1 min 911 taking call getting info and dispatch to correct unit
- 3 min (if present in station) Volunteer EMS may have to come from their home / work to get a vehicle w/AED
10-20 min is not uncommon in rural towns.
- 3 min to drive to the site (usually farther)
- 3 min to get from EMS unit get equipment then to victim
- 1 min to set-up unpack do assessment
- 1 min to analyze
- 15 min to the first shock! Too LATE!!!! 5-7 Min too Late.

So we decide that everyone alive is worth the best chance possible, and getting AEDs in public places is critical! NO bystander who is put in the stressful situation and any facility that has this unit on their walls should not have to worry that they have to deal with a lawsuit because they tried to save someone's life!

This is extremely important to me as an instructor. I get asked the question every time -- "do I have to worry about getting a law suit against me? There are public facilities that would love to have AED but they are told by their insurance companies and risk managers that they are at risk of a law suit if they have a unit on site!! I have had this told to me more than once and can provide details to prove it.

We live in the Constitution State, and our citizen look to have laws that help and protect them. **This is one that does!**