



To: Judiciary Committee

From: Scott Myrick, ATC, LAT
Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association, Chair, Governmental Affairs Committee

RE: Raised SB 687, "An Act Concerning Automatic External Defibrillators."

Date: March 14, 2008

Good morning. I would like to thank Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and the members of the Judiciary Committee for this opportunity to speak on behalf of SB 687. My name is Scott Myrick. I am an Athletic Trainer, and Chair of the Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association Governmental Affairs Committee. I am here today representing the Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association (CATA). I would like to thank you for your attention to the issue of Automated External Defibrillators (AED's) in health clubs and in athletic departments of institutions of higher education.

The Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association is pleased that the committee is considering this legislation. The CATA is acutely aware of the incidence of sudden cardiac arrest in physically active, apparently healthy populations. It is important to understand that sudden cardiac arrest can strike anyone, at any time. Sudden cardiac arrest is not the same thing as a heart attack. It results from an electrical disturbance in the heart that causes the heart to go into an abnormal rhythm (ventricular fibrillation) and cease to function. This can occur to infants, young children, teenagers, college students, and adults of all ages and physical conditions. The grim statistics include the fact that approximately only 5% of victims of sudden cardiac arrest survive. This is due in no small part to the fact that most people do not receive defibrillation within 3 to 5 minutes. Without early defibrillation, the survival rate will not improve. It is unrealistic to expect that an ambulance or other emergency crew will be able to provide defibrillation in this time period, so the necessity for automated external defibrillators (AED's) on the premises of health clubs and athletic departments is clear. The Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association supports SB 687.

The Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association would also like to encourage the committee to consider amending the bill to include a requirement for elementary and secondary schools in Connecticut to have an AED accessible both during and after the school day.

Legislation requiring schools to have AED's has been implemented in a dozen states, and others are presently considering similar bills. In 2002, the state of New York implemented legislation requiring schools to have AED's. At least 38 children in New York have been saved since then, because there was an AED at their school. Since Ohio implemented legislation in 2005, 13 children have been saved because they received early defibrillation. The Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association remains steadfast in its support of requiring AED's in elementary and secondary schools in Connecticut. While sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death in athletes, we are equally concerned about school staff and employees, and students who may be stricken while in class, at recess or in physical education class. There are far too many stories of children collapsing and dying at school, on a basketball court, or during a race. It is well established that a significant number of these children could likely have been successfully resuscitated if an AED had been on site.

In conclusion, the Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association is pleased that the Judiciary Committee has introduced legislation that is related to requiring automated external defibrillators (AED's) for groups that are in higher risk categories for sudden cardiac arrest. We request that you consider amending SB 687 to add a requirement for elementary and secondary schools in Connecticut to have AED's. On behalf of the Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association, I thank the committee for allowing me to speak this afternoon.