



To: Public Health Committee
From: Vicky Graham, ATC, LAT
Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association, Governmental Affairs Committee
Volunteer, American Heart Association
RE: House Bill 5812, "An Act Concerning the Availability of Automatic External
Defibrillators for Public Use"
Date: March 10, 2008

Good afternoon. I would like to thank Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, and the members of the Public Health Committee for this opportunity to speak on behalf of HB 5812. My name is Vicky Graham. I am an Athletic Trainer at Wesleyan University, and a volunteer for the American Heart Association. 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). The Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association believes that lives will be saved by requiring the availability of one or more AED's at mass gatherings, as summarized in section 1 of HB 5812.

The Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association has a concern about section 2 of HB 5812, which includes the requirement that a person or entity maintain one or more AED's in an accessible location. Currently, the Connecticut Good Samaritan statute offers protection to the user of the device, but does not offer protection to the entity providing the AED. We believe that this is a significant roadblock to any type of public access AED program. The CATA requests that the Public Health Committee strongly consider amending the present Good Samaritan statute to include Good Samaritan immunity protection to the entity providing the device.

I had originally wanted to follow up these comments by encouraging the committee to consider amending the bill to include a requirement for schools in Connecticut to have an AED accessible both during and after the school day. I learned Friday afternoon that the Judiciary Committee is raising the issue in SB 687 in regard to AED availability at institutions of higher education. I would like this committee to know that the Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association is 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 to see that the Public Health Committee is modifying the mass gatherings statute to require AED's. We believe that it is crucial to provide entities Good Samaritan immunity protection in order to adequately implement any public access AED program. We ask that you amend HB 5812 to include this protection. On behalf of the Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association, I thank the committee for allowing me to speak this afternoon.