



CONNECTICUT ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION

To: Judiciary Committee

From: Vicky Graham, Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association

RE: Raised SB 1089: "An Act Concerning Automatic External Defibrillators."

Date: March 20, 2009

Good afternoon. I would like to thank Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and the members of the Judiciary Committee for this opportunity to speak regarding SB 1089, "An Act Concerning Automatic External Defibrillators." My name is Vicky Graham and I represent the Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association (CATA). I would like to thank you for your awareness of the need for Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) to be accessible for groups at higher risk for sudden cardiac arrest.

The CATA is acutely aware of the incidence of sudden cardiac arrest in physically active, apparently healthy populations; however, 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) in public places, including health clubs and schools, is clear.

We are asking the committee to amend this bill to include simply the Good Samaritan protection for the entity. We believe that this important provision has a better chance of passage if the bill includes only this section. A major impediment to public access AED programs in Connecticut has been the lack of Good Samaritan protection for the entity that provides or donates the device. This has resulted in health clubs, churches, youth sports leagues, private schools and colleges, and others who want to make an AED accessible, not to do so. Many have actually turned down donations of AEDs, because of legal advice regarding the lack of Good Samaritan protections for the entity. We suggest the following substitute language for consideration specific to sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 52-557b of the general statutes:

(a) A person licensed to practice medicine and surgery under the provisions of chapter 370 or dentistry under the provisions of section 20-106 or members of the same professions licensed to practice in any other state of the United States, a person licensed as a registered nurse under section