SB 981 AAC Availability of AED's in Schools

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Public Policy Committee Chair

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Chairman Harris and Chairman Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, I am writing in support of SB 981 AAC Availability of AED's in Schools. It is a well established fact that many lives are saved by timely use of AED's. Persons suffering a cardiac event are often in need of immediate electroconversion in order to re-establish a functional cardiac rhythm. Since time is of the essence in these situations it is often a matter of how fast quickly can someone respond to the emergency.

For a variety of reasons our public school buildings are seeing more and more use by a variety of groups as well as the public at large. This understandably brings more people into the buildings, which in turn creates more risk that someone will have a cardiac emergency. While this is excellent use of public properties and it is outstanding for the public to take advantage of the facilities available, it does raise the risks of something happening.

There are also times when students attending the schools have a cardiac emergency and could easily require an AED to prevent cardiac arrest. In addition, as you know, there are many school related events like sports competitions, concerts and theater arts presentations that bring in a large number of spectators. All these people bring with them a certain level of risk for someone each year having a cardiac event.

Given this increased risk and now the availability of the lifesaving technology that AED's provide it seems to be critical that these devices be installed in our public schools. Having this device immediately available is critical to the survival of someone when there is a very small window of opportunity. Even though most towns have excellent emergency response teams the AED would only make their job easier. If the person has been successfully cardioverted then the EMT's and Paramedics would be able to stabilize the person and transport them to a hospital much more rapidly.

Therefore I would respectfully request that the Public Health Committee strongly consider this bill and vote in favor of the bill in the interest of providing another safeguard for all our citizens that use public school buildings.