

Co-Chairs Gerretana and Ritter, Vice-Chairs Slossberg and Lyddy, and all distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Michele Ciancola. I am an Orange, Connecticut resident. I am here in *strong support* of HB 5514, an Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Public Health Statutes. I am specifically in support of Sec 22 which deals with increasing access to AEDs on college campuses.

I need your help in passing legislation which would require immediate point of care defibrillators to be on site at any state or private college/university within the state of Connecticut; and also a provision that any athlete collapsing from "apparent" heat exertion or sports related collapse should be taken to a hospital with a trauma unit. The Center for Disease Control estimated, as recent as 2003, an annual average of 688 deaths occurred due to heat exertion in athletes, a number that continues to grow. Despite the National Athletic Trainer's Association position statement on exertional heat illnesses, untimely preventable deaths continue to occur in young athletes. Some of these deaths are cardiac related and yet despite state laws on cardiac arrest and defibrillators, which place automated external defibrillator (AED), devices in public domains, colleges and university athletic facilities may not have these AEDs readily available. This omission may be due to the misconception that young athletes are not susceptible to sudden life threatening events. This notion however suggests discrimination of sorts due to age and athletic prowess. Currently the NCAA states that exertional heat stroke is the third leading cause of on the field death in athletes.

To give you some background, on October 24th 2011, my 20 year old son, Joseph Paul Ciancola, collapsed on a University of Rhode Island athletic field during strength and conditioning practice. He suffered what appeared to be initial heat stroke. Emergency first responders, including university emergency responders had no AED or thermistor. My son was taken to a local county hospital geographically closer to URI regardless of the severity of the life threatening event. Once there, the decision was made to transport him to Rhode Island Hospital, as they were equipped with a trauma unit. By this time and delay in emergency treatment, his temperature was 107.9 and rhabdomyolysis (breakdown of muscle fibers that leads to kidney failure) had ensued. During this time Joey was resuscitated five times, required 394 units of blood product due to anticoagulation and bleeding had compartmental syndrome with fasciotomy, laporotomy and right lung removal. This horrific chain of events provides you with a description of the pain and suffering that my young healthy son endured. Joey was strong and fought hard, but lost his battle three days later at Rhode Island Hospital; an untimely death that could have been prevented if proper protocol and equipment (AED and thermistor) were in place.

Aside from the tragic loss of life and emotional impact a loss of this severity will have on family, community and institution there is a fiscal opportunity in legislation of this nature. The average retail cost of an AED is approximately \$1200. To properly equip the University of Rhode Athletic campus to allow for an AED to be available for athletes is approximately \$30,000. The opportunity for an investment of this nature is to reduce the tremendous emotional and financial impact an incident of this nature has on a public institution and supporting healthcare facilities. Additionally, the training for use of the AED for athletic coaches and trainers will raise the level of sensitivity and proper response to tragic events like the one that took my son's life.

My hope is that no mother or athlete will ever have to bear what I have been through. Would you be willing to discuss the possibility of making this hope of sponsoring legislation, "Joey's Law" to address this national public health concern that afflicts young athletes in the United States?

Thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Michele Ciancola

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