

Public Health Committee
Senate Bill 684 Testimony
February 23, 2015

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is Kristin Fries and I am here to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 684. This particular Senate Bill is addressing the concern for implementing Hands Only CPR and AED use in public school curriculums. I would suggest adding language to the bill the bill that clearly states students must get hands-on experience doing CPR compressions and are made aware of the importance of using an AED.

I am a BSN Registered Nurse and a Connecticut licensed Emergency Medical Technician. I work both in a hospital Emergency Department and in the pre-hospital setting. Within the medical profession we get to witness the positive effects early CPR and AED use creates in enhancing the possibility of survival from sudden cardiac arrest. Your chances of survival from sudden cardiac arrest without early intervention diminish with each passing minute. Taking 30 minutes of a high schooler's education to teach the skills needed for hands only CPR and AED use can help save lives.

With the Public Act 09-94 Connecticut schools are required to have a minimum of one AED available throughout the day. With such standards, it seems imperative to teach the students the proper recognition of a problem and use of both CPR and the AED, which maximizes the benefit to having an AED available for early intervention. This even mimics the first three links of the American Heart Association's five links in the "Chain of Survival". The first three links being (1) recognizing a problem and calling 9-1-1, (2) starting CPR, and (3) applying the AED.

I am also fortunate to be a part of Ellington Rescue Post 512. This organization works with high school age students to educate them at an Emergency Medical Responder level per the state of Connecticut. This gives the students the opportunity to work as an EMR in the pre-hospital setting at the early age of 16. During the course, the students are educated on CPR and AED use per the American Heart Association guidelines. The students then get to ride on the ambulance and deliver high quality care to

community members in need. Many of these students have seen the effects of early intervention and support educating their equals in CPR and AED use. My role as an advisor is to continue the student's education, assist in perfecting skills and encourage future growth and development.

One of the greatest joys is when the student can see firsthand the positive effects they have on the patient's they care for. For example, after bystanders witnessed a person fall in sudden cardiac arrest CPR was immediately initiated. With timely response from the students and ambulance proper AED use was provide to the patient. The patient had spontaneous return of circulation and was able to thank the student and bystanders for saving his life in person shortly after with no deficits since there was no delay in care.

Teaching hands only CPR and AED use is not as extensive as the education required to become licensed at the EMR level or higher, but instead only a 30 minute lecture that can be implemented in a routine health class offered at all high schools. Supporting the Senate Bill 684 will help high school students throughout the State of Connecticut become the vital lifesavers needed for early intervention in sudden cardiac arrest through the use of CPR and AED use.

Thank you for time and support.

Kristin Fries

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