



First I would like to thank the Public Health Committee and the co-chairmen, Senator Gerratana and Representative Ritter for taking on this very important bill and for the opportunity to testify in its support.

My name is Dr. Gilead Lancaster. I am the Director of Non-Invasive Cardiology at Bridgeport Hospital, an Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine at the Yale School of Medicine, the President of the Connecticut Cardiology Foundation and the Immediate Past President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Cardiology- an organization that represents most of the doctors and nurses that treat heart patients in Connecticut. Our national organization, the American College of Cardiology, was an innovator of evidence based medicine with the development of medical guidelines and Appropriate Use Criteria for tests- tools that are now the backbone of quality healthcare around the world.

It is an unfortunate fact that just about every one of our members has had an encounter with someone who has had an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest- a condition that may be brought about by any number of causes, but which ultimately manifests as a heart rhythm disturbance and cardiovascular collapse – “a heart attack if you will.” For these victims time is of the essence: if cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, is initiated early the chance of death or permanent brain damage can be reduced significantly. It has been estimated that for each minute that CPR is delayed the chance of survival decreases by 7 to 10%.

With this sobering fact, the American Heart Association came out with a “Scientific Advisory” advocating that all high schools students be taught CPR as well as the use of the automated external defibrillator- or AED. In short, the document explained that CPR is much more successful if a bystander has been trained in CPR and the use of an AED, and that having such a program in high schools will raise a generation of first responders. We have submitted a copy of this document which not only explains the need for such a program, but various suggestions on how to implement it.

The Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Cardiology believes that CPR and AED training should be a requirement for high school graduation and should be included in the first aid curriculum. We believe that the course should include the following minimum conditions:

That CPR training must conform to the core teaching objectives for lay provider training as outlined in the AHA Guidelines for CPR (including any interim updates).

That CPR training must provide an opportunity to practice and master psychomotor skills related to CPR

That CPR training must make students aware of the purpose of an AED and its ease and safety of use

That CPR training can be provided as a standalone offering or as part of another class (i.e. health education, physical education, etc).

Over the last two years , I personally on behalf of the CCACC have worked with the state board of education and more recently with the state department of education toward this goal. As you may know the state board of education has adapted a resolution supporting these goals.

The CCACC has recently formed a nonprofit 501(c)(3) foundation raising funds to assist needy school districts in obtaining the resources to implement CPR/AED Training in schools.

Our organization has a cadre of volunteers who are ready to help establish such a program and make sure it becomes an integral part of every high school student's education and skill set. Many of our members not only teach CPR to other healthcare professionals, they also teach people how to teach CPR- and they are eager to do this in the schools.

One of these members is Gloria Bindelglass a nurse who teaches doctors and nurses all levels of life support and has submitted her testimony (because she is unable to be here today) about her experiences teaching CPR and the use of AEDs to school children.

So in summary; we the cardiology community of Connecticut, urge you to make hands-on-training in CPR and AED a part of the First Aid curriculum for all high school students in Connecticut so that we can raise generation after generation of first responders and life savers. The life they save may be yours!