

Public Health Committee
Senate Bill 684 Testimony
February 23, 2015

Dear members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Mahika Jhangiani and I am a senior at Norwalk high school. I am giving testimony today to voice my support for senate Bill 684, concerning increased training in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and for it to specifically include CPR and AED training in schools. I believe it is very important that students learn CPR in school and get hands on training on how to perform chest compressions as well as learn how to use an AED.

I was in 8th grade when my family and I were attending our New Year celebration and suddenly my friend's grandfather became unresponsive. My mother rushed to his side and began performing CPR after directing someone to activate 911. Soon after, the ambulance arrived and the EMS took over care. One could never imagine that a person that was laughing, smiling, dancing, surrounded by his loved ones, the epitome of health, could suddenly collapse the way he did. I saw my mother's quick action and it made me realize the importance of people being comfortable in performing CPR.

During my Sophomore year, I became a certified Emergency Medical Responder. I witnessed and heard of several stories of when CPR and the prompt use of an AED helped save lives. One incident that specially touched me was that of Harrison Malec. He was just 14 which was so close to my own age when he went into cardiac arrest. He was out running with his rowing team when he suddenly collapsed. His teammates carried him back to the coach, activated 911 and started CPR. The EMTs arrived and quickly applied the AED. Thanks to his teammates' prompt action ,performance of CPR and use of an AED Harrison is alive and well today.

Those stories and accounts motivated me not only to learn more, but also want to teach this life saving skill. So I took training and got certified as an American Heart Association Basic Life Support CPR and First Aid instructor and started teaching CPR and First aid classes for Westport EMS.

In January of 2014 ,Adam Greenle a 6th grader at Bedford Middle School in Westport Connecticut went into cardiac arrest. Fortunately, the nurses were able to resuscitate him by performing CPR and using the AED. I helped teach the Hands only CPR class for faculty members at his school in

Westport since everybody wanted to get trained when they saw how CPR and the use of an AED had saved Adam's life. The teachers and students at the middle school showed such enthusiasm and commitment to learning how to perform CPR and the use of the AED.

Teaching the Hands only CPR class to the seventy-five plus members at Bedford middle school inspired me to bring the training to my town Norwalk. Since October of 2014, with the help of my co-instructors at Westport EMS, I have been organizing and teaching classes all throughout the Norwalk school district for faculty and students as a part of my independent senior project "SAVE A LIFE ." It has been a humbling experience to be presenting to those that were my teachers and peers, elementary through high school. My goal is to teach, at the minimum, all the faculty in Norwalk Public Schools before the end of April 2015.

At a class I taught at Nathan Hale Middle School, one of my former teachers came up to me and shared about how he had been trying for years to get AEDs and CPR training to the Norwalk Public Schools system. Him and his family have a history of heart disease and he was worried one day something would happen to him at school. He was so grateful that finally there were trained people in the school who would be willing to step up and help if God forbid something was to happen to him.

Hearing personal, touching stories like these at each class have shown me how crucial it is that more and more people get trained and become comfortable in performing CPR. Bystander CPR can double or triple survival rates from cardiac arrest. 21 states have passed school CPR requirement legislations and *unfortunately Connecticut is not one of them.* Having this quick 30 minute training implemented in our middle and high school curriculum could mean the difference between life and death for not just adults but also students like Harrison and Adam.

If I as a teen can teach the CPR skills, surely students my age can learn and perform it when the need arises if given the training. Your support of the Senate Bill 684 will allow students to become the vital lifesavers that are so needed.

Thank you so much for your time and support.

Sincerely,
Mahika Jhangiani

