

Public Health Committee  
Public Hearing  
Senate Bill 684 Testimony  
February 23, 2015

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

My name is Rachel Lampert, I live in Branford. I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill 684 regarding teaching CPR in high schools in CT.

I am an academic cardiologist/ electrophysiologist (heart rhythm specialist) at Yale, both researching issues relating to sudden cardiac arrest and clinically treating survivors, and a parent of a seventh grader. Speaking in all of these roles, I cannot urge you too strongly to support the legislation requiring our high school students learn CPR as part of health class.

As a clinician, I have seen countless success-stories of patients who would be dead if not for the fact that someone near them was trained in CPR. A basketball player at Albertus Magnus, a high-schooler from Bridgeport who went down in his martial arts studio and was brought back by the CPR-trained trainer, a dental technician, wife, and mother of a young child, a grandfather collapsed running at the gym. On the flip side, we also see patients who never wake up because CPR was not performed and by the time the ambulance arrived, they were brain dead.

Research also tells us that those we see in the hospital are the very small lucky minority--more than 90% of patients who suffer a cardiac arrest die. While much of my own research is looking at ways to prevent sudden cardiac arrest, for most victims, the arrest was the first sign of a problem. I know that we will likely never be able to prevent SCA, thus a prepared community who can perform CPR and work an AED is imperative to decrease the death toll from this horrific event.

CPR and AEDs are well-proven to save lives, but we know from studies of SCA that they are only rarely used, due to lack of knowledge and/or lack of confidence in their own ability in bystanders. Increasing the numbers in the community who can perform CPR will save lives. Instruction as adolescents, with repeated training during high school, will increase both the confidence that they can do it and also will instill a sense of civic duty in performance of CPR.

As a parent of a 13 year old, I love the idea that my daughter will not only be trained in how to save a life, but will learn that it is her civic duty to do so. What could be more empowering to a teenager than giving them the tools to save a life? What could better instill a sense of responsibility to our fellow-citizens than the expectation that this is what citizens do?

Teaching CPR in schools here in CT will save lives of our neighbors, while empowering our kids. This is about as no-brainer as it gets.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rachel Lampert, MD

Associate Professor of Medicine

Section of Cardiology/Electrophysiology

Yale School of Medicine

203-785-4126 office

203-215-6461 cell