



January 20, 2023

To: House Appropriations Committee

From: Tina Zuk, Government Relations Director, American Heart Association

Re: \$30,000 funding for CPR in Schools implementation

On behalf of the American Heart Association, I would respectfully ask the committee to consider appropriating a small amount of funding, \$30,000, to help implement an act the legislature passed ten years ago.

The legislature enacted Act 151 in the hopes of ensuring that all high school students would be trained in Hands-only CPR and a new generation of lifesavers would graduate each year. The legislation required compression-only CPR to be taught as part of comprehensive health education.

Lawmakers agreed having students trained in hands-only CPR was critical in addressing low cardiac arrest survival rates. About three quarters of cardiac arrests occur in the home, yet 90% of people who suffer out-of-hospital cardiac arrests die. However, when CPR is performed, CPR can double or triple a victim's chance of survival.

I ask the committee to include \$30,000 in the Budget Adjustment Act to help implement this requirement. While lawmakers gave the green light to the teaching of CPR, it appears resources are necessary to make it happen.

A survey we conducted of Vermont schools found that 68% said Hands-only CPR is not being taught at their school and 73% said their school needs resource to help implement this requirement. **The American Heart Association estimates that \$5 for every high school senior, or approximately \$30,000 to fund CPR and First Aid Training Kits for schools would help them to easily meet this requirement.**

As one teacher said, "It would be so much easier if I could just grab the equipment out of my closet and do it." Others noted that borrowing manikins or asking local rescue organizations to come in and perform the training was a barrier to getting it done.

\$30,000 seems to be a minimal investment that could go a long way towards ensuring schools can meet a requirement deemed necessary by the legislature, but, more importantly, that would ensure the best chance of survival should a Vermonter collapse at home of cardiac arrest.

It's important to also note that Hands-only CPR training in schools was likely a victim of the pandemic with many schools teaching virtually. An appropriation in the BAA, perhaps funded by

unspent ARPA funds, would bring a renewed emphasis on the importance of the instruction of a life-saving skill that fell by the wayside with students out of schools. The recent cardiac arrest of Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin has highlighted the importance of CPR nationally. It would benefit Vermont to take advantage of the current interest in this life-saving skill by providing funds to help teach it to Vermont youth.

Thank you for your consideration.

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