

Dear Appropriations Committee Members,

Please accept this as my written testimony requesting the inclusion of \$150,000 in the FY2026 budget to provide a grant program for Vermont schools most in need of resources to help implement cardiac emergency response plans.

Though more than 200 Vermont schools have AEDs, Vermont's cardiac arrest survival rate is among the lowest in the nation at 7.5%. We need to do more. Additional resources could help boost survival rates by ensuring schools can implement cardiac emergency response plans by having trained lay-responders, especially in rural areas, where EMS response times may be challenged. The funding could be used for AEDs and CPR training.

Two years ago, we received a call from a college friend who's son was suddenly fighting for his life after sustaining a non-traumatic sudden cardiac arrest during a pre-season football practice. Although this event happened in Utah, his parents are both UVM alums and his father is a Vermont native. He could easily have been going to school here in Vermont and then this would have added to the 24 cardiac arrests in Vermont schools. Josh had no prior history and had gone through a thorough medical screening at Utah State University prior to playing football. He had no signs or symptoms that alerted the medical staff to his underlying condition. Here is part of Josh's story:

Redshirt freshman wide receiver Josh Davis suffered a "non-traumatic" sudden cardiac arrest during a spring practice at Maverik Stadium. He is currently in the Intensive Care Unit at McKay-Dee Hospital in Ogden, and has been taken off life-sustaining medical devices and is breathing on his own, according to the university. "Awake, alert, and breathing on his own," head coach Blake Anderson told Utah State play-by-play voice Scott Garrard. "The training staff absolutely saved his life. No hesitation at all. Miracle."

Davis collapsed at the beginning of Thursday's practice and was immediately treated by Utah State's athletic staff, led by Mike Williams, who is the associate athletics director for sports medicine, and followed by emergency medical personnel, who transported him to Logan Regional Hospital, the university said. Davis, a second-year player from Carlsbad, California, was stabilized at Logan Regional Hospital before being transported to McKay-Dee Hospital, where the critical care team continued treatment with to lower the body temperature to preserve Davis' neurological function, according to a statement. His parents, Matt and Chrissy, arrived in Utah on Thursday night.

Please help us to prepare for the sudden cardiac arrest scenarios before it's too late to save your friend's son or daughter's life! Failing to prepare is preparing to fail. When we know better, we should do better!

Thank you,  
Rebecca

Rebecca Choquette, ATC

Research Coordinator/ Healthcare Professional  
Department of Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation | The Robert Larner, M.D. College of Medicine  
University of Vermont  
434A Stafford Hall | 95 Carrigan Avenue  
Burlington, VT 05405-0068