

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.

As a school nurse and athletic trainer, as well as an EMT and member of our local volunteer rescue squad, I feel that this is an important public safety measure that requires your support through this funding to be implemented successfully. These cardiac emergency response plans can more than double survival rates. Anyone who has a cardiac arrest at Vermont schools would have a better outcome if lay-responders acted quickly to save their life while awaiting a 911 response.

Please help all schools to be prepared. This small investment could literally mean the difference between life and death.

Thank you!

Sara Dunbar ATC, RN, EMT  
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