

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.

A few years ago I attended a baseball game with my family when a gentleman went into cardiac arrest. Only one person knew CPR and the AED machine was unreachable. The group didn't know what to do, there was a lot of scrambling. Had the game attendees received training through their school such as a fire drill, the group would have been more prepared to help and also support the one person who was CPR trained.

There have been 24 cardiac arrests at Vermont schools in the last ten years including at the Milton vs. Barre basketball game on Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> at Spaulding where 16 year-old [Milton sophomore Dominic Barcomb was saved](#) due to the cardiac emergency plan, training and quick response of Spaulding's staff and coaches. His life was saved because the school was prepared.

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