



TO: Wisconsin Legislature

DATE: June 3, 2025

RE: LRB 2054, relating to cardiac emergency response plans in schools

Cardiac arrest strikes suddenly and without warning, impacting people of all ages and walks of life. What happens in the minutes following oftentimes determine whether the person lives or dies. Please co-sponsor LRB 2054, authored by Representative Spiros and Senator James, ensuring schools are prepared to respond if there is a cardiac emergency on school property or at a school-sponsored athletic event. The deadline to co-sponsor is Friday, June 6 at noon.

Each year in the United States, more than 350,000 people suffer cardiac arrest outside the hospital, and only 10% survive. This includes over 23,000 children under the age of 18, with about 40% of youth cardiac arrests being sports related.

Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating. To survive, multiple things need to happen within minutes: the 9-1-1 emergency response system needs to be activated, CPR needs to be initiated, and the person's heart needs to be restarted with an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

Two years ago, Buffalo Bills player Damar Hamlin suddenly collapsed while playing Monday night football. Thankfully, he was surrounded by a team of trained professionals who had practiced what to do in that exact situation. Today, Hamlin is back playing football with the Buffalo Bills and his experience is a great example of why training and preparation is so important.

Schools are the nucleus in our communities, not only where youth and school staff gather, but where families gather for sporting events and other activities. It is an important place to focus on being trained and prepared to respond. This is especially important in rural areas of our state, where emergency response may take longer.

When minutes matter, having a plan in place and a team trained to respond can mean the difference between life and death. LRB 2054 ensures schools are prepared to respond if someone— a student, faculty or visitor— experiences cardiac arrest while on school property or at a school sponsored athletic event. It also creates a grant program to help schools purchase AEDs and train faculty in CPR and the use of an AED.

To be prepared, schools should have a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP). At a minimum, every CERP should include:

- Establishing a response team trained in CPR and AED use
- Educating all staff on recognizing sudden cardiac arrest and how to activate the response team
- Placing AEDs throughout the campus for quick retrieval
- Including annual drills, similar to fire drills
- Coordinating the school's emergency plan with local first responders
- Evaluating the plan annually, including post-event evaluation and review

Please help make our communities safer and improve survival from cardiac arrest by co-sponsoring LRB 2054. The deadline to co-sponsor is noon on June 6.

If you have question, please reach out to Nicole Hudzinski, Government Relations Director with the American Heart Association, at nicole.hudzinski@heart.org or 608-225-4042.