



Senate Education Committee
Chair, Senator Mark Hass

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Testimony in support of SB 275

Chair Hass, members of the Committee, my name is Stephanie Tama-Sweet and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association in Oregon. Our mission is to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular disease and stroke. We are here today in support of SB 275, a bill that would require all Oregon high school students be trained in life-saving CPR before graduating from high school.

Increasing public awareness of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) and supporting policies that encourage bystander CPR including CPR and AED training in schools is a top priority for the American Heart Association.

Oregon has already taken strides in raising awareness of SCA and AED use. In 2005 the Oregon Legislature passed HB 3482 which established a grant program to provide AEDs in at least two public school facilities in each school district. The bill authorized the Oregon Department of Education to seek funds and assistance from the United States Government and its agencies or from any other source, public or private, for the establishment of a grant program. This law also contains a Good Samaritan clause which protects well intentioned citizens using an AED in aid of another from potential lawsuits from any resulting injury.

The legislature also passed SB 1033 in 2010 which requires each school campus in a school district to have at least one AED on the premises. Schools are required to comply with this law by January 1, 2015.

SB 275 is very simple – it requires all that all high school students be trained in CPR before they graduate from high school. Training high school students has several benefits – students will be able to take the skills learned in high school and apply them for the rest of their lives. Students have also been shown to take the CPR skills they learn in school and train their families and friends, reaching far more people than we would otherwise be able to reach by conducting traditional trainings.

SB 275 does not require CPR certification but rather the teaching of CPR skills. We would like to see a ‘hands on’ component which would require students practice CPR and the use of an AED. We are also open to schools finding creative ways to accomplish the training through integrating CPR training into their PE or Health classes which are required classes for high school graduation. The actual training can take about 20 minutes, less than one class period over the course of a high school degree. We have submitted an amendment that addresses some of these changes. In the amendment the AED component has been removed as schools will not be required to have AEDs on site until 2015.

Training high school students in hands-only CPR will not only prepare Oregon students to save the life of a friend should they go into cardiac arrest at school, they will also bring this knowledge with them for the rest of their lives – to save a parent, friend or loved one.

Thank you so much for your time and I’m happy to respond to any questions.