

Submitter: Matt Bunch
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4160

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Representative Matt Bunch, and I proudly represent House District 51, serving rural Clackamas County, including communities like Canby, Sandy, and Estacada. I am submitting this testimony in support of legislation requiring Cardiac Emergency Response Plans, or CERPs, in our schools.

In rural Oregon, emergency preparedness looks very different than it does in urban areas, and this bill recognizes that reality.

In many of the communities I represent, emergency medical response times are longer due to distance, geography, and limited staffing. When a cardiac arrest occurs, every minute without CPR or access to an AED reduces survival chances by as much as 7 to 10 percent. In those critical first minutes, schools cannot rely solely on outside help. An immediate, well-coordinated on-site response can be the difference between life and death.

Rural communities also face limited access to nearby hospitals or trauma centers. Schools are often one of the few places where adults are consistently present and able to respond during the day. A Cardiac Emergency Response Plan bridges the gap between the moment an emergency occurs and the arrival of professional medical care.

In rural areas, schools are more than just schools, they are community hubs. They host athletic events, performances, and public gatherings that bring together students, families, and community members. A school-based response plan ensures preparedness not only for students and staff, but also for spectators and visitors who may be on campus.

Many rural schools rely heavily on volunteer coaches and staff, particularly for athletics and extracurricular activities. These individuals may not always receive standardized emergency training, and in many places, CPR training is not currently required for coaches. CERPs establish clear expectations, defined roles, and consistent training so that adults supervising high-risk activities are prepared to act. While having an AED on campus is critical, it is not enough by itself. A CERP ensures AEDs are properly placed, routinely maintained, and that staff know where they are and how to use them. AEDs are designed to be simple—turn them on and follow the prompts—but they must be part of a broader, practiced plan.

Rural schools also face higher turnover and staffing shortages, which can lead to gaps in institutional knowledge. A Cardiac Emergency Response Plan provides continuity, ensuring that emergency procedures are clearly communicated and consistently understood year after year.

Most importantly, rural students deserve the same level of safety and preparedness as students in more resourced urban areas. CERPs create a uniform baseline of

cardiac emergency readiness regardless of ZIP code.

These plans are not complicated. They simply require identifying a response team, placing and maintaining AEDs, communicating the plan to staff, coordinating with local EMS, and practicing the response. Much of the training required is already addressed in administrative rule.

This bill is a practical, commonsense step that strengthens school safety and supports rural health outcomes. I urge the committee to support this legislation and help ensure that every school, urban or rural, is prepared to respond when seconds matter most.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Matt Bunch

Oregon House District 51