



INCREASE COMMUNITY ACCESS TO AEDS

THE ISSUE:

Providing communities with readily accessible AEDs combined with appropriate training can mean the difference between life and death for individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) outside of a hospital setting. As schools are the epicenters of communities, it is crucial that they are equipped with the proper equipment and training to swiftly address emergency situations. Unfortunately, not all schools have AEDs available nor provide adequate training to respond to cardiac emergencies. This legislation is particularly timely as recent media coverage of high-profile SCA events among professional athletes has further underscored the need for Congress to address this problem.

ACC'S POSITION:

Through legislation such as the **Access to AEDs Act** (H.R. 2370/S. 1024), Congress can mitigate fatalities associated with SCA among young athletes and their communities. The inability of a school to purchase or maintain an AED should not be a barrier to the availability of this life-saving tool. Additionally, this legislation ensures that schools will adhere to best practices by requiring any heart health screening programs for student athletes to be consistent with American College of Cardiology (ACC) and American Heart Association (AHA) guidelines.

ACC'S ASK:

Cosponsor and support the **Access to AEDs Act** (H.R. 2370/S. 1024) introduced by **Reps. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick (D-FL)** and **Bill Posey (R-FL)** in the U.S. House and **Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ)** and **Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)** in the U.S. Senate, which would establish a federal grant program for schools to purchase and maintain AEDs, as well as provide training opportunities for their proper usage.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 300,000 people experience out-of-hospital cardiac arrest per year. Individuals experiencing this event face a mortality rate between 70% and 90%.



The **Access to AEDs Act** adheres to best practices by ensuring student heart health screening programs are developed in accordance with ACC/ AHA guidelines.



This bipartisan legislation has been supported by a wide coalition of organizations ranging from medical societies, patient groups and professional sports leagues.



ACC is a member of the Smart Heart Sports Coalition, convened by the National Football League, which urges Congress to support the **Access to AEDs Act** and **HEARTS Act**.



IMPROVE STUDENT HEART HEALTH

THE ISSUE:

SCA in young people is becoming all too common. According to the CDC, approximately 2,000 people under the age of 25 die from SCA each year, and cardiomyopathy is one of the most common genetic heart conditions.

Cardiomyopathy, a disease that makes it difficult for the heart to pump blood throughout the body, can lead to heart failure, and it is important to educate communities about the risks it poses. Education, awareness and training in responding to emergency incidents is crucial in mitigating fatalities among young people, including young athletes.

ACC'S POSITION:

The ACC's Mission is to transform cardiovascular care and improve heart health for all, which includes advocating for cardiomyopathy awareness and education initiatives to be developed and distributed to schools, teachers and parents.

The ACC has also long supported increased AED access and training. In a recent markup, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce included portions of the ACC-endorsed **Access to AEDs Act** (previous page) in a broader piece of legislation, which includes funding for cardiomyopathy awareness and education. The ACC supports the **Access to AEDs Act** and the **HEARTS Act**, as either would provide schools with the resources necessary to help keep their communities safe.

ACC'S ASK:

Cosponsor the **Cardiomyopathy Health Education, Awareness, and Research and AED Training in the Schools (HEARTS) Act of 2024** (H.R. 6829) introduced by **Reps. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Andy Kim (D-NJ)**, which would establish education and

awareness initiatives related to cardiomyopathy and supports the placement of AEDs in schools in addition to CPR and AED training.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



The **HEARTS Act** reauthorizes funding for existing programs, meaning its anticipated cost is likely to be less than if it were to create new federal programs.



Significant portions of the **Access to AEDs Act** were incorporated into the **HEARTS Act** in a March 2024 committee markup.



SCA disproportionately impacts Black athletes as they are three times more likely than White athletes to die from SCA.



The **HEARTS Act** passed the House Committee on Energy and Commerce in March 2024.