



GREAT PLAINS
CHAPTER

AMERICAN COLLEGE of CARDIOLOGY®

March 13, 2025

Chair Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Good morning, my name is Mevan Wijetunga. I am a practicing cardiologist at the Altru Health System-Grand Forks, as well as the current Governor of the North Dakota-Great Plains Chapter of the American College of Cardiology (ACC). Today, I am testifying on behalf of the North Dakota-Great Plains Chapter to lend our full support to House Bill 1363.

House Bill 1363 will require public and nonpublic schools to develop cardiac emergency response plans (CERP) to respond to incidents involving an individual who is experiencing sudden cardiac arrest while on school grounds or participating in an athletic practice or event. House Bill 1363 is critical to ensure student and community safety.

Cardiac arrest can happen anywhere, at any time. More than 23,000 children under 18 experience cardiac arrest outside of a hospital each year. Having a comprehensive plan, like a CERP, with a trained team in place to respond to sudden cardiac arrest can make the difference between life and death.

A CERP can be a stand-alone guideline or merged with a school's existing medical emergency response plans. It can also be used by school personnel, healthcare providers, boards of education, and school safety advocates. Additionally, a CERP requires all schools to have and maintain an AED on-site. There have been too many cases across our state where individuals fall victim to sudden cardiac arrest due to delayed intervention, resulting in profound incapacity or death. Many of these lives could have been saved by immediate action and the use of an AED. House Bill 1363 ensures the AED is ready for use in an emergency, securing the safety of students, school staff, and visitors.

I urge the committee to pass House Bill 1363. Equipping our schools with AEDs and school responders who are trained in sudden cardiac arrest response will save lives and strengthen our communities.

Thank you.

Mevan Wijetunga, MD, FACC

North Dakota-Great Plains ACC Chapter Governor

mevanwijetunga@yahoo.com