

Testimony in Support of HB 1363
CERP
3/17/25
10:00 am Senate Education Committee Hearing
Rm 216

Chairman Beard and members of the Education Committee. My name is Amy Heuer, I am Co-Executive Director for the North Dakota Society of Health and Physical Educators (ND SHAPE), a volunteer with the American Heart Association, and a recently retired Middle School Health and Physical Education Teacher. I am here to provide testimony and support of HB 1363.

In my 25+ years of teaching, I have experienced over 100 emergency response drills, including fire, tornado, lock down, and active shooter drills. For all of them, my job was to ensure the students in my care followed the drill protocols. Thankfully, I have not had to experience a fire, tornado, or active shooter while teaching.

I have however, experienced several possible life-threatening situations while in school ranging from asthma, anaphylaxis, broken bones, and seizures. We did not have an established plan for any of those situations. Typically, the teacher present would send a student to find me, as I was a certified CPR/First Aid instructor. My schedule usually had me in 2-3 different places in the building, usually on different floors, sometimes taking 5 minutes before I would arrive. While not having a set plan resulted in a delay arriving to the emergency, my delay thankfully did not result in any harm for the students, but that wouldn't be the case if it had been a cardiac emergency.

While most cardiac arrests happen in the home, the second highest amount happen in public settings. As schools are often the hub of a community, the risk of a cardiac event happening on property increases.

Having a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP) in place in schools will help prevent a delay in care during a cardiac emergency, helping to protect our students and the community. Creating a plan is not difficult, and there is plenty of guidance to assist.

It starts with education about sudden cardiac arrest and the importance of CPR and AED use, as well as exploring the steps of a CERP plan.

Next is to explore the local resources and organizations that can assist. This could include EMS services, community organizations, local health departments as a start.

You are then ready to identify members of the Cardiac Emergency Response Team. This is a group of staff members that have current CPR/AED training and are designated responders (if present) during a cardiac emergency. A school may involve different people depending on the time of day, and thought should be given to include administrators, a staff member from each area of the building, health and pe teachers, coaches, parents and other afterschool activity advisors when planning.

Once your core team is identified, which most schools already have established as their school safety team, it is time to draft the plan. The plan should be evidence based and have clear action steps, including who is responsible for each step. Samples are available to assist with this step.

Like other emergency plans, it is important that it is integrated into local emergency responders actions. It should be clearly shared with staff, including anyone that uses the building outside of the school day. This can be done by preparing a document that is given to any supervisor of activities. Additionally, it should be posted throughout the building, being sure to clearly mark the location of any AEDs on property.

Practicing the Cardiac Emergency Response Plan will allow the school to improve its efficiency and be ready to act in a case of cardiac arrest, but it is not required to be done annually. Like any skill, the more it is practiced, the easier and faster the response will be.

As a CPR/1st Aid instructor for over 15 years, I fully support schools having a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan, and I hope you will as well. Please vote yes on House Bill 1363.

Amy Heuer
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