

Testimony in Support of HB 1363
CERP
1/27/25
4:00pm Education Committee Hearing
Coteau AB

Chairman Heinert and members of the Education Committee. My name is Amy Heuer, 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 life-threatening situations while in school ranging from asthma, anaphylaxis, broken bones, and seizures. We did not have a plan for any of those situation. Typically, the teacher present would send a student to find me, as I am a certified CPR/First Aid instructor. My schedule typically had me in 2-3 places in the building, which were 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 did not result in any harm, 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. We know that schools are often the hub of a community, which increases the risk of a cardiac event happening on school property.

Having a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan 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 to respond during a cardiac emergency. A school may need different members depending on the time of day, and should include administrators, a staff member from each area of the building, health and pe teachers, coaches and other afterschool activity advisors to name a few.

Once your team is identified, it is time to draft the Plan. It 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 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. 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. 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.