

Testimony in Support of HB 1376
CPR in High Schools
1/27/25
3:30pm Education Committee Hearing
Coteau AB

Chairman Heinert and members of the Education Committee. My name is Amy Heuer, I am 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 for HB 1376.

In July of 2024, the ND Department of Public Instruction adopted the latest version of our Physical Education Content Standards. Under the high school standards Level 1, Personal and Social Responsibility 5, it states that a student “Demonstrate competency in performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and associated skills (e.g., automated external defibrillator (AED) and first aid) gained through psychomotor skills practice based on current national guidelines.” The clarification states “Opportunities to recertify should be offered before graduation. This standard may be addressed in a required health course based on individual school district curriculum.”

I am very excited for the timeliness of this legislation, as it will assist our teachers in meeting this standard.

Students will individually benefit from this legislation. Over my career I was able to certify over 150 middle school students in CPR. Many would come back to me to re-certify while in high school, as they were not able to do so through their school. The typical reason

students wanted certification was for employment: babysitting, lifeguarding, and working in health care.

At the beginning of my classes, students would typically be hesitant and nervous, with lots of questions. Through the skills practice and exposure to AED use, these students gained not only the knowledge, but also the confidence to use these skills if needed. By certifying more students in CPR, our communities will also see a benefit. More than 70% of cardiac emergencies that happen outside of medical facilities happen at home. With the current crisis in staffing of our rural EMS and first responders, having more people trained in basic lifesaving skills is imperative. Prompt CPR can increase survival rates in cardiac emergencies by up to 300%. When CPR is delayed, survival rates drop by 7-10% for every minute of the delay. Just think about how many lives could be positively affected by having more North Dakotans prepared for cardiac emergencies.

When* this legislation passes, it is important that schools and districts, as well as teachers, are made aware of the reimbursement, and they have a clear understanding of what can be included in the reimbursement. Some of the expenses my school and I incurred included my initial training to teach CPR certification classes, manikins and their replacement parts, practice AEDs, class materials, student certification costs, extra duty funds for classes outside of school hours, to name just a few.

I would like to ask if there was consideration to include AED training as well as conscious and unconscious choking, as cafeteria behavior can be a bit crazy in schools. Eventually I would also hope that HB 1376 be amended to include middle schools, as they are more than capable of learning and performing these lifesaving skills.

My final recommendation would be to either add a new course code specific to CPR class and CPR certification, or to have another tracking system in place to record the number of students trained in CPR, as well the number certified in CPR. I believe the opportunity to study the overall impact of this legislation's actions on cardiac emergencies could be important to the continuation of this bill as well as to the medical community.

Again, I want to say that I fully support HB 1376, and I ask for your support as well.