

March 18, 2024

Re: Written Proponent Testimony on HB 2494

Chair Baumgardner, Vice Chair Erickson, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) represents more than 450 practicing pediatricians in the state. It is the fundamental goal of the KAAP that all children in the state of KS can grow up safe and strong, with faith in the future and in themselves. On behalf of the KAAP, we thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of HB 2494, as amended, which establishes requirements for the incorporation of Cardiac Emergency Response Plans (CERPs) in schools in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).

HB 2494 serves KS communities by providing support for schools to have the tools to respond appropriately when a cardiac emergency occurs at school buildings and activities. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. In 2014, approximately 360,000 people suffered a SCA in a community setting. While the perception is that SCA only occurs in adults, approximately 7,000 of these people were children. Developing a coordinated response to SCA in our schools will impact not only our youth but also the many teachers, staff, and family members present in schools on any given day. Prompt bystander cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) use can improve survival in the event of SCA. Defibrillation within 3-5 minutes of collapse can result in 50-70% survival. Finally, we are aware that with each minute of delayed defibrillation, survival with a good neurologic outcome decreases by 10%. Therefore, by schools having CERPs in place, they will be able to act quickly and effectively when faced with SCA.


The causes of SCA in children vary by age and recognition of the signs of SCA is imperative. For younger children, causes include secondary (noncardiac) diagnoses most often of a respiratory etiology. For older children and adolescents, causes of SCA include underlying congenital conditions like hypertrophic cardiomyopathy and coronary artery abnormalities present from birth but that may be undiagnosed. Commotio cordis is a notable cause of SCA in youth. It is due to an abnormal heart rhythm that occurs after a blow to the chest during a critical time in the cardiac electrical cycle. The child's underdeveloped chest is more prone to commotio cordis than the adult chest. Urgent cardiac defibrillation is needed in the case of commotio cordis. Prompt recognition of SCA by school staff is crucial, regardless of the etiology. It is certainly a tragedy when SCA goes unrecognized, is not promptly and appropriately responded to, and results in death or poor neurologic outcome. We have learned this from the story of Adam Lemel, whose death from SCA inspired the formation of Project Adam, a national organization dedicated to providing cardiac emergency response readiness education for schools and communities.


HB 2494 will allow for SCA preparedness in KS schools by developing and adopting statewide standards for CERPs, training of school district employees on identification and appropriate response to SCA, establishing cardiac emergency response teams in schools, rehearsing CERPs each year, identifying procedures for making notifications to local

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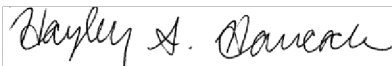
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EMS operating within the school district, coordination and incorporation of CERPs within existing school district emergency response plans, procedures for ensuring accountability in adopting and implementing such plans, implementing placement of AEDs and routine maintenance of such devices within school buildings, including appropriate placement in accordance with established guidelines, and training of school personnel in the use of AEDs and CPR during an emergency in accordance with established guidelines.

HS 2494 is an important step in protecting all KS students, teachers, school staff, and community members present at a KS school or school-based activity when a SCA occurs. The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics welcomes the opportunity to support HB 2494, and our members remain available to partner with community schools to work together toward implementation of CERPs within KS schools to ensure school safety and cardiac emergency response readiness in the event of a SCA.

Respectfully submitted,



Hayley Suzanne Graue Hancock, MD, FAAP

Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics Board Member