



SB 945 – Pupil instruction: CPR and AED

Senator Akilah Weber Pierson, M.D.

SUMMARY

SB 945 would require the governing board of a school district or the governing body of a charter school grades 9 to 12, inclusive, shall provide instruction in performing compression-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) as part of a course required for graduation

BACKGROUND

Every year, more than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests (OHCA) occur in the United States, and nearly 90% of OHCA's are fatal. Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart malfunctions and abruptly stops beating. While it is often confused with a heart attack, cardiac arrest is caused by an electrical malfunction in the heart that prevents the heart from beating normally. It is estimated that about 23,000 children under the age of 18 experience cardiac arrest outside of a hospital.

Without immediate, effective cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) from a bystander, a person's chance of surviving sudden cardiac arrest decreases 7-10% per minute. When a CPR/AED-trained bystander is near, and can act quickly and effectively, survival rates can double— even triple. Yet, 70% of people feel helpless to act during a cardiac emergency because they do not know what to do.

Further, the neighborhood in which a person suffers SCA may dramatically affect the odds of survival. A witnessed sudden cardiac arrest victim in low-income Black and Hispanic neighborhoods is less likely to receive CPR. Black and Hispanic persons are less likely than White persons to receive bystander CPR regardless of the neighborhood where the arrest occurred. Compared to White children, CPR is 41% less likely for Blacks and 22% less likely among Hispanic children.

Current law requires high schools where a health course is a graduation requirement to include instruction in performing compression-only CPR as part of the course and encourages those entities to provide pupils instruction on the use and importance of an automated external defibrillator (AED). While this was an important step, not all school districts have a health class requirement.

Research shows kids are highly motivated to learn basic life-saving skills. Young people trained in CPR/AED at school have saved lives by knowing what to do during the precious minutes after someone suffers SCA. They have saved brothers and sisters, parents, and others in their community—even strangers. Several have been honored at the state Capitol. (San Jose, Sonoma, Los Angeles)

A recent study showed ~ 75% of young adults who did a single, 20-minute CPR training session — either face-to-face or with virtual reality — said they'd be willing to perform CPR on a stranger. Recently, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Cardiology reaffirmed its staunch support of CPR/AED training in schools as a direct link to improved survival rates—an important consideration given California has one of the highest number of cardiac arrests and one of the lowest survival rates. Teaching students CPR/AED could save thousands of lives by filling communities with lifesavers – those prepared to give cardiac arrest victims the immediate help they need to survive until emergency medical response arrives—typically in 6 – 12 minutes, which exceeds the 3- to 5-minute window for an SCA victim to have optimal survival chances with early bystander intervention.

Forty-one states and Washington, DC require CPR training as part of their high school curriculum (many for nearly a decade)— it is time for California to do the same.



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CPR/AED can mean the difference between the life and death of a loved one. It may be the most valuable lesson a student can learn: how to save the life of a family member, teacher or friend by performing the simple steps of CPR and following the audio-visual prompts on an AED.

To increase the number of laypersons trained in hands-only CPR and how to use a publicly accessible AED, *all* students should be trained prior to graduating from high school, not just those who attend schools with a health class.

SPECIFICALLY, THIS BILL

Would require the governing board of a school district or the governing body of a charter school grades 9 to 12, inclusive, shall provide instruction in performing compression-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) as part of a course required for graduation.

SUPPORT

Eric Parades Save a Life Foundation (Sponsor)
American Heart Association (Co-Sponsor)
California Chapter of American College of Cardiology

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