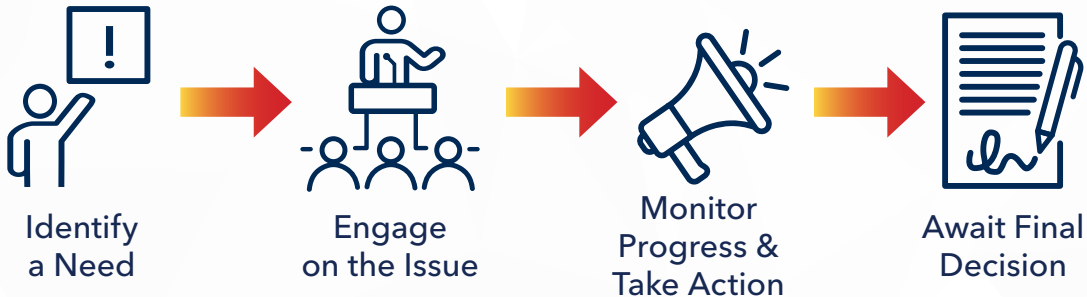




The ACC Georgia Chapter spearheaded legislation to establish sudden cardiac emergency response plans and require automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in all public schools, K-12.

State AED Update: Georgia's Win from Start to Finish.



Identify a Need

Prior to this legislative session, the ACC Georgia Chapter identified the need to expand the state's AED laws to include all Georgia students beyond those in high school. The Chapter identified a potential bill sponsor, Rep. Lee Hawkins, Chairman of the House Health Committee. They met with him several times to encourage him to champion this effort, sharing poignant personal stories that both bolstered their argument and humanized the issue. Hawkins agreed to take the lead on this issue, working with Georgia Chapter leaders to draft the legislation.



Engage on the Issue

Jonathan H. Kim, MD, MSc, FACC, ACC's Sports and Exercise Section Chair and member of ACC's Georgia Chapter Leadership Council, testified in support of the bill during the

Georgia General Assembly's House Health Committee Hearing. He stressed the importance of expanding the state law in all K-12 schools, beginning in the 2024 - 2025 school year, and including at least two emergency action plan drills per school year, with at least one per semester. The bill was voted out of committee unanimously. It then passed the full House by a vote of 151-1.





Monitor Progress & Take Action

The bill slowed through the Senate, but Chapter members continued to meet with lawmakers and advocate for its support.

J. Jeffrey Marshall, MD, FACC, testified

in support of the bill in the Senate Education Committee hearing. It was voted out of committee and sent to the Senate Rules Committee. In anticipation of a vote in the Senate, the Georgia Chapter and allies held a press conference at the General Assembly. This cross-collaboration demonstrated how crucial passing this legislation was to the health and well-being of Georgians statewide.



"I truly think this will represent model legislation for the rest of the country," said Dr. Jonathan Kim. *Not many states have these laws in place, and this is really something we can all be proud of."*



Await Final Decision

With only days left in the session, the bill was hung up in the Senate Rules Committee due to political dynamics. During this time, the Georgia Chapter continued to activate

its grassroots network, sending over 60 letters to committee members, and calling the committee chairman directly to persuade members to move the bill to the Senate floor. Shortly after the rules committee acted, the bill was passed out of the Senate by a vote of 48-0. The bill was signed into law by Governor Kemp on April 23.



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 300,000 people experience SCA outside of a hospital setting. Those individuals face a 70-90% mortality rate.

Federal AED Update: Access to AEDs Act and HEARTS Act

Access to AEDs Act

The **Access to AEDs Act**, led by Reps. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick (D-FL) and Bill Posey (R-FL) in the US House (H.R. 2370) and Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY) in the US Senate (S. 1024), continues to gain traction.

These companion bills were introduced shortly after Damar Hamlin's incident in January 2023, which shone a light on the need to expand access to AEDs in communities to help reduce fatalities from out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest. The House bill currently has 104 co-sponsors, and the Senate bill has 11 co-sponsors.



In addition to the **Access to AEDs Act**, a bill led by Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ), the **Cardiomyopathy Health, Education, Awareness, Research and Training in Schools (HEARTS) Act** (H.R. 6829) has been amended to include provisions from the Access to AEDs Act. The bill initially focused on providing education, awareness and resources to identify at-risk families and further research cardiomyopathy. During an Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee markup, members updated the bill to include federal funding for schools to purchase AEDs, create cardiac emergency response plans and conduct CPR and AED training.

However, this bill does not include the screening provisions and adherence to ACC guidelines for such screenings, which are included in the **Access to AEDs Act**. This bill currently has three co-sponsors, with no Senate companion bill. ACC Advocacy's continued push for expanded AED access resonates in Congress, visibly demonstrated by its inclusion in two separate pieces of legislation. We will continue to provide updates as these bills make their way through the legislative process.



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