

To Senator Steve A. Cwudzinski; Chair, Senate Education Policy Committee;
Members of the committee

Seventeen years ago this month I died at work and was saved by the immediate response of my coworkers who performed CPR and rapidly applied an AED. While I did not have my SCA at school, I am representative of a common demographic for whom this bill is intended: an adult fan, parent, referee, coach, or volunteer who suffers an SCA at school. We know that nationwide, prepared communities can have many more “saves” from cardiac arrest than non-prepared ones. We also know that for every 1-minute delay in response, the victim’s chance of survival decreases by 10%.

I am a member of a grassroots organization called the Minnesota SCA Advocates. SCA stands for sudden cardiac arrest – when the heart suddenly stops beating effectively and a person will die if something isn’t done quickly to bring the heart back to normal rhythm.

Minnesota SCA Advocates is a group established in 2024 with a mission of saving lives from sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) by building a statewide collaboration of individuals and organizations dedicated to education, prevention and treatment of sudden cardiac arrest.

Several dozen people are members of the organization – many of them parents of adolescents who had SCA. Some lost a precious son or daughter to SCA, others have a son or daughter who survived SCA (due to prompt cardiopulmonary resuscitation or CPR by bystanders and the use of an automated external defibrillator or AED). Other members are adult SCA survivors, community advocates and/or leaders involved in SCA education, awareness and CPR/AED training and AED placement.

Members of our group have helped train thousands of Minnesotans in CPR and AED use, and have raised money for AEDs in schools, parks and public buildings. The people we train are grateful for having tools and skills to be able to save a life. Our members are prepared to assist schools if this bill passes in helping to implement its provisions. The schools will not have to do this alone!

I understand that your committee may soon review Senate File 1457 regarding cardiac emergency response plans for schools. I was given 17 extra years of life and have been able to care for my aging parents, be present at graduations, weddings, and the birth of my first grandchild. I can vouch for the importance of this bill!

Thank you for considering this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

Cheri L. Olson, MD
MN SCA Advocates
President, 7Rivers Cardiac Arrest Preparedness and Education