

February 20, 2025

To Senator Steve A. Cwodzinski
Chair, Senate Education Policy Committee and members of the committee:

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.

I understand that your committee will review Senate File 1457 regarding cardiac emergency response plans for schools. From my own experience, I can vouch for the importance of this bill.

I worked in health care journalism for 50 years and I once worked for the national office of the American Heart Association in Dallas. In retirement I've become an avid pickleball player. I worked with Plymouth's Parks & Rec department to get a grant from the Rotary Club for an AED at our local outdoor pickleball courts. I know four people who died on local pickleball courts or gyms and were brought back to life by people trained in CPR and with the use of an AED – in Brooklyn Park, Eagan, Golden Valley, and Minnetonka. Through MN SCA Advocates I've met parents of four sons who had sudden cardiac arrest; only one survived because of bystander CPR and AED use. I've met three adults who survived cardiac arrest long ago. If you've ever met someone who has gained new life in this manner, or, conversely, families of someone lost to sudden cardiac arrest, you'll never forget it.

Thank you for considering this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Schwitzer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Schwitzer
Plymouth volunteer
Member of Minnesota SCA Advocates
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