

Good afternoon, Chair Cwodzinski and members of the Senate Education Policy Committee. My name is Kelly Youland. I would describe myself as a transplant-Minnesotan, a pharmacist, a wife, and a mother to three amazing young girls. But one thing I never labeled myself as was a political activist. If you had asked me one year ago if I thought I would be standing before you testifying for *anything*, I would have responded with a very quick “no.” But, in addition to those other things that I am, I am now a passionate CPR advocate, after my three month old daughter, Emma, suffered a cardiac arrest last spring.

Cardiac arrests can happen for a multitude of reasons. As you’re probably aware, they can happen to well-conditioned professional athletes on the football field, to very sick patients in the hospital, to those with heart abnormalities and to those with perfectly functioning hearts, like our daughter’s.

When a *child* suffers a sudden cardiac arrest, or SCA, outside of the hospital, it’s always unexpected. It can happen on a sunny spring day without any warning, just like it did with Emma. But, Emma’s lucky enough to have a doctor as a dad and she is here before you now, meeting all of her age-appropriate milestones, because CPR was started almost immediately. Her heart took sixteen painstakingly long minutes to beat again on its own, but during that time, CPR pumped her blood when her heart could not. But what if we could live in a world where we didn’t need to count on luck or the off chance that someone’s parent was in the medical field?

It is well understood that the chance of survival for an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest increases the sooner that CPR is started. Unfortunately, only 40%¹ of people who suffer one get immediate help, contributing to the dismal statistic that only 5-10%² of people survive. We are in support of SF 1457 because the more people that know CPR and how to use an AED, the higher likelihood of survival. Even a minute or two delay in Emma receiving CPR could have led to a much different outcome. A ten minute delay and she would not be here before you. There are so many heartbreaking examples of children who suffered a SCA and the symptoms weren’t recognized, or someone wasn’t trained in CPR, or an AED wasn’t nearby. We want Emma and her sisters and our neighbors’ children to attend schools and athletic practices surrounded by staff that know what to do if such an emergency were to happen again. And it will, to other Minnesota children. SCA unfortunately kills more than 2,000 children and adolescents in this country each year and approving this bill would help to reduce that number and keep Minnesota children safe. We need to rely less on the *chance* that someone trained will be nearby, and have it be the standard going forward.

Thank you Senator Westlin for authoring this bill and to members of the committee for your consideration!

1. <https://cpr.heart.org/en/resources/cpr-facts-and-stats>
2. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/ebiom/article/PIIS2352-3964\(23\)00029-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/ebiom/article/PIIS2352-3964(23)00029-4/fulltext)