

NORTH CAROLINA

Acute Cardiac Events in Schools:

Each year, more than 356,000 cardiac arrests occur outside of a hospital in the U.S., 90% of which are fatal. That's because only about 40% get the immediate help they need before emergency responders arrive. Approximately 23,000 of these cardiac arrest victims are children under the age of 18. A whopping 60% of these cardiac arrests are NOT sports-related. This is why NC needs to continue the great work it has done by implementing Cardiac Emergency Response Plans in high school athletics and making that policy school-wide. The American Heart Association aims to implement policies to strengthen the Chain of Survival and improve health outcomes for victims of cardiac arrest. [\(Source\)](#)

Needed Legislation in the Works:

In early February 2025, the American Heart Association was able to procure a bill sponsor in the North Carolina Senate to protect students against preventable death from sudden cardiac arrest. This important piece of legislation will:

1. Require NC public and charter schools to adopt and implement cardiac emergency response plans.
2. Strengthen AED placement requirements at all North Carolina public and charter schools
3. Require appropriate school staff to obtain and maintain training for CPR, AED use, and first aid.

Who Does this Impact?

There are approximately 1,500,000 students served by public schools across North Carolina. 1,358,000 in public schools and 146,261 in public charter, regional, and lab schools. [\(Source\)](#) There are approximately 188,000 employees in NC public schools according to the NC Department of Public Instruction.

How Does Sudden Cardiac Arrest Affect this Population?

Incidence for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest occurring on school grounds range from .17-4.4 per 100,000 students per year and .51-4.3 per 100,000 staff members per year.

[\(Source\)](#) That means between 3 and 66 students and between 1 and 8 staff members will likely experience a cardiac arrest on school grounds in North Carolina this year.

The overall survival rate to hospital discharge for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) is 9.1% Nationally, 16.7% of children who are victims of OHCA experience the event in a public setting. Among all victims of OHCA in public settings, only 15.6% survive to hospital discharge with good neurological function. [\(Source\)](#) Quick use of CPR and AED can double or triple a person's chances of surviving cardiac arrest. [\(Source\)](#)

How will a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan Help?

In the event of a sudden cardiac arrest, a CERP can increase survival rates by 50% or more by enabling a trained lay-responder team to take action. The safety of students, school staff, and visitors can be enhanced with a coordinated, practiced response plan where school CERP teams are trained and empowered to administer lifesaving care until EMS arrival.



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