

The Smart Heart Act (H. 3831)

Status: Passed the House Unanimously on April 8, 2025

Sponsors: Reps. Hayes and Lawson



American
Heart
Association.

➔ Status: Awaiting a hearing in the Senate Education Committee

Objective of the Smart Heart Act: Increase survival for students who experience sudden cardiac on school grounds or during a school-sponsored athletic event.

Acute Cardiac Events in Schools:

Over 350,000 cardiac arrests occur outside the hospital each year in the United States. Approximately 23,000 of these cardiac arrest victims are children under the age of 18. Almost 40% of these events are sports related, and only 40% of cardiac arrest victims get the immediate help they need before emergency responders arrive. The baseline survival rate for sudden cardiac arrest is about 10%. Unfortunately, sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is the leading cause of death for high school athletes.[1]

South Carolina Smart Heart Act:

On January 29, 2025, lawmakers introduced the bipartisan Smart Heart Act (H. 3831) to protect students against preventable death from sudden cardiac arrest. The Smart Heart Act would:

- Require South Carolina public and charter schools to adopt and implement cardiac emergency response plans (CERPs);
- Strengthen AED placement requirements at schools and school-sponsored athletic events; and
- Require appropriate school staff to obtain and maintain training for CPR, AED use, and first aid.

How Will the Smart Heart Act 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 arrives.

Did You Know?

- About 20% of cardiac arrests happen in public places.
- EMS response times can vary drastically across South Carolina, from a few minutes to 30+ minutes.
- In South Carolina, high schools are only required by law to have a single AED on school grounds [2].
- Elementary and middle schools are not required by law to have AEDs on school grounds.
- AEDs are not required by law to be present and accessible at school-sponsored athletic events.
- The last time South Carolina updated AED placement requirements for schools was 2008 [2].
- CPR can double or triple a person's chances of surviving sudden cardiac arrest [1].
- Quick administration of an AED can increase survival from sudden cardiac arrest from 10% to up to 70% [1].
- Modern AEDs are easy to use and provide clear, spoken instructions for the user to follow.
- States neighboring South Carolina have already implemented some or all of these policies.

[1] <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/abs/10.1161/CIR.0000000000001303>

[2] <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t59c017.php>