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SENATE BILL NO. 181

Offered January 10, 2024

Prefiled January 8, 2024

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-271.9, relating to public elementary and secondary schools; cardiac emergency response plans required; grant program established.

Patron—Rouse

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-271.9 as follows:

§ 22.1-271.9. Cardiac emergency response plans required; grant program.

A. As used in this section:

"Automated External Defibrillator" or "AED" means a lightweight, portable device that delivers an electric shock through the chest to the heart for the purpose of potentially stopping an irregular heartbeat or arrhythmia and allowing a normal heartbeat rhythm to resume following sudden cardiac arrest.

"Cardiac emergency response plan" or "CERP" means a written document that establishes the specific steps to reduce death from sudden cardiac arrest that occurs on school grounds.

"CPR" means cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

"High-need school" means any public elementary or secondary school (i) at which at least 50 percent of children are eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals, (ii) that participates in the federal Community Eligibility Provision or any federal, state, or local universal free meals program, or (iii) that is classified as a Title I school pursuant to Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-10, as amended.

"Sudden cardiac arrest" means a condition whereby the heart unexpectedly malfunctions and stops beating and that is likely to lead to death if not treated within minutes.

B. Each public elementary or secondary school shall develop a cardiac emergency response plan that addresses the appropriate use of school personnel to respond to incidents involving an individual who is experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency (i) while on school grounds and (ii) in the event that such school has an athletic department or organized athletic program, while attending or participating in an athletic practice or event. Each such CERP shall integrate nationally recognized evidence-based core elements such as those recommended by the American Heart Association guidelines and shall integrate provisions and guidelines, consistent with relevant law, relating to:

1. Establishing a cardiac emergency response team;

2. Activating such team in response to a sudden cardiac event;

3. Integrating the CERP into the local community's emergency medical services response protocols in accordance with subsection C;

4. Practicing responses to sudden cardiac arrest on school grounds through the use of drills;

5. Placing and routinely maintaining AEDs in the school building in accordance with guidelines set by the American Heart Association;

6. Ensuring periodic training in first aid, CPR, and the use of AEDs by appropriate staff, including school nurses, athletic trainers, and coaches, that follows evidence-based guidelines set forth by the American Heart Association or nationally-recognized guidelines focused on emergency cardiovascular care;

7. Disseminating the CERP to appropriate individuals throughout the school community; and

8. Reviewing, evaluating, and, as necessary, amending the CERP on an ongoing and annual basis.

C. Public elementary or secondary school officials shall work directly with local emergency service providers to integrate the CERP into the local community's emergency medical services response protocols.

D. With such funds as may be appropriated for such purpose pursuant to the general appropriation act, the Department shall establish and administer the CERP Grant Program for the purpose of awarding grants, on a competitive basis, to any public elementary or secondary school to assist such school in the development or implementation of its CERP or in the purchase or funding of activities or equipment that further promotes CERP preparedness, including the purchase of AEDs, the funding of AED maintenance, the purchase of first aid or CPR training kits and educational materials, and the funding of first aid or CPR training for faculty and staff. The Department shall establish such rules, regulations, processes, procedures, and deadlines as it deems necessary for the proper administration of the CERP Grant Program and, in considering applications and awarding grants, shall give priority to high-need schools.

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