

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY - 2025 SESSION

CHAPTER 382

An Act 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 or emergency action plans required.

[S 817]

Approved March 24, 2025

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 or emergency action plans required.

A. As used in this section:

"Athletic emergency action plan" or "athletic EAP" means an emergency action plan that establishes and details emergency management and response preparations, strategies, and guidelines specifically for emergencies that occur in an athletic setting, including sports-related health emergencies and physical injuries that occur in the course of participating in athletic practices, games, competition, or other events.

"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 federal 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 and implement a cardiac emergency response plan or an athletic emergency action 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 sponsored by such school or conducted as a part of such school's athletic department or organized athletic program. Any public elementary or secondary school that has an athletic department or organized athletic program shall at all times have either a CERP or athletic EAP in place. Each such CERP or athletic EAP shall integrate nationally recognized evidence-based core elements and nationally recognized evidence-based 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 or athletic EAP into the local community's emergency medical services response protocols in accordance with subsection C;**
 - 4. Practicing at least annually 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 nationally recognized evidence-based guidelines;**
 - 6. Placing clearly marked and easily accessible AEDs at each venue where school-sponsored athletic practices or competitions are held;**
 - 7. Determining, in accordance with guidelines set by the American Heart Association or other organization focused on emergency cardiovascular care, the placement of any AED in a school building or venue pursuant to subdivisions 5 and 6 and ensuring that any such AED is identified with appropriate signage and is on-site or made available in an unlocked location on school property in a manner such that the AED can be accessed and placed on an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency within three minutes;**
 - 8. Ensuring 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;**
 - 9. Disseminating the CERP or athletic EAP to appropriate individuals throughout the school community;**
- and**

10. Reviewing, evaluating, and, as necessary, amending the CERP or athletic EAP 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 or athletic EAP into the local community's emergency medical services response protocols.