



For Immediate Release
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Federal Grant to Bring AEDs to Schools

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah - June 9, 2009 -- The Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes (SADS) Foundation applauds the passage by the House of Representatives of H.R. 1380 (the "Josh Miller HEARTS Act"). This legislation establishes a federal grant program to help fund the placement of automated electronic defibrillators (AEDs) at elementary and secondary schools across the country and also requires school personnel be trained in the operation of AEDs.

Tragically, each year in the United States, several thousand young people between the ages of 1 and 22 die of sudden cardiac arrest due to cardiac channelopathies. Long QT Syndrome (LQTS) is the most common cardiac channelopathy, affecting approximately 1 in 2,500 individuals in the United States with 500-1,000 new carriers born each year. This syndrome causes cardiac arrhythmias in seemingly healthy and often young individuals and can lead to syncope, seizures, cardiac arrest, and sudden death. LQTS is one of the more common causes of sudden death in young people, resulting in 2,000 to 3,000 deaths per year. Appropriate use of AEDs can reduce the risk of untoward events that lead to death as people diagnosed with SADS conditions respond well to defibrillation.

According to Michael J. Ackerman, M.D., Ph.D., Mayo Clinic and SADS Foundation's Board Chair, "Cardiac arrest does not have to be fatal. It is often possible to shock the heart back into a normal rhythm with an AED. If a sudden cardiac arrest occurs outside a hospital environment and if an AED is available in this same location, then an AED can be used to shock the heart of the victim and hopefully restore normal rhythm. Early defibrillation of cardiac arrest victims is essential. The earlier the victim is defibrillated, the greater the chance of survival." Dr. Ackerman explains that AEDs consist of two electrodes that are placed on a patient's chest while a computer interprets the heart's rhythm and determines whether an electrical shock is needed. The rescuer then pushes a button that delivers a shock to the heart. AEDs have become so simple that anyone can be trained to use them.

AED devices provide high voltage electrical shocks to a dying heart to normalize the heart beat. AEDs are computerized defibrillators that talk users through the use of the device in an emergency. This legislation will expand the placement of AEDs to one of the most critical areas that children who suffer from these conditions are: their schools. This, and the training mandated by the bill, will save lives. According to USAToday, many schools across the United States have already begun to equip themselves with AED devices.

The SADS Foundation thanks Representative Betty Sutton (OH-13) for introducing this life-saving legislation and urges the Senate to consider and quickly pass H.R. 1380.

The SADS Foundation exists to save the lives and support the families of children and young adults who are genetically predisposed to sudden death due to heart rhythm abnormalities. For more information on SADS conditions and a risk assessment, please visit www.StopSADS.org or call 1-800-STOP SAD.

Supporting Families. Saving Lives