



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James S. Alesi

Senator Jim Alesi Legislation to Incorporate Cpr Training in High Schools Passes Senate

JAMES S. ALESI June 14, 2012

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“CPR in Schools” Legislation Would Arm Entire Generations of New Yorkers with CPR Training

Senator Jim Alesi today announced that the Senate passed his bill (S.2491) to incorporate basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instruction and use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) into high school physical education or health classes.

“Having performed CPR twice in recent years, I have first-hand experience at how critical it is to start CPR as soon as possible to increase the survival rate of cardiac arrest victims,” said Senator Alesi. “Unquestionably, this legislation will increase awareness and knowledge of this important life-saving technique and provide students with valuable basic training. As we continue to hear more stories about our state’s young people suffering from sudden cardiac arrest, I cannot think of a better combatant than arming entire generations of New Yorkers with basic CPR skills.”

"If you suffer sudden cardiac arrest, your best chance at survival is receiving bystander CPR until EMTs arrive," said Dr. Stephen Cook of the University of Rochester Medical Center and American Heart Association advocate. "Eighty percent of out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrests happen in the home - so the life you save will likely be that of a loved one. We are so thrilled the Senate passed this bill, championed by our own Senator Alesi. CPR saves lives."

While this legislation does not require students to become certified in CPR, the basic instruction will provide students with the valuable skills necessary to save lives. Currently, CPR may be offered as a voluntary addition to the health curriculum. Due to the increased awareness of heart disease and sudden cardiac arrest, CPR instruction can provide students with the knowledge necessary to act in the event of a cardiac emergency. In 2010, the American Heart Association revised its CPR guidelines to place a greater emphasis on chest compressions – commonly known as the “hands-only” method. Learning this simpler CPR technique can provide students with the knowledge necessary to save other students’ lives, or the lives of a sibling or parent.

Senator Alesi has been a strong advocate for CPR and AED instruction throughout his tenure in the Legislature. Recently, Senator Alesi introduced a resolution memorializing Governor Cuomo to proclaim June 1-7, 2012, as CPR and AED Awareness Week in the State of New York – part of National CPR and AED Awareness Month. Over the past few months, Senator Alesi has attended a number of CPR-related events including: visiting Averill Park High School outside Albany to celebrate the school’s efforts to train more than 1,000 students being trained in CPR in the last three years; hosting the American Heart Association to Albany for its annual advocacy day; and discussing the merits of CPR instruction with members from Mercy Flight Central, an organization Senator Alesi helped to launch a decade ago. In March of this year, as a first step in leading by example, Senator Alesi and his entire staff became certified in CPR and AED use, having taken an AHA course at the Penfield Community Center. Continuing his grass-roots advocacy for CPR training, Senator Alesi encouraged the AHA to conduct a training seminar for his colleagues – and various Senate personnel – in Albany prior to the close of the 2012 Legislative Session; the training took place this morning in concert with the Senate’s push to pass Senator Alesi’s CPR in Schools Bill.

Passage of the CPR in Schools bill culminates an incredibly successful, twenty-year career by Senator Alesi as a strong advocate for increasing public awareness of CPR and AED use, and as a steadfast supporter of volunteer emergency service providers. As a precursor to the CPR in Schools legislation, Senator Alesi championed another similarly significant piece of legislation that has saved lives: a bill in 2006 that requires public facilities with more than 1,000 people to be equipped with an AED and at least one trained employee. Senator Alesi has also introduced bills to increase volunteerism in local emergency service organizations, such as providing a tuition benefit for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers, that was negotiated and included in a previous budget, and legislation to reduce costs for volunteer service organizations, including a bill that would have required energy providers to offer services to ambulance organizations at residential rates.

The bill will be sent to the Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg (D).

Senator Alesi has also been instrumental in securing millions of dollars for dozens of emergency service organizations in Rochester and Monroe County through the years, including Mercy Flight Central and RIT Student Ambulance, one of the few state-credited, all-volunteer student ambulance corps in New York State. For his efforts on behalf of emergency organizations and volunteers, Senator Alesi has been named an honorary member of most fire departments in the 55th Senate District, and has previously served a member of the Board of Directors for Mercy Flight. Growing up in a family which served with volunteer fire and ambulance companies, Senator Alesi understands how vital these organizations are to New York State.

Recently, Senator Alesi received the inaugural Dr. David Satcher Honorary Community Health Improvement Award from the University of Rochester Medical Center for his unwavering commitment to the Center for Community Health. Lastly, Senator Alesi is well-known in the State Capitol as the preeminent author of children's health legislation. Since joining the Senate, Senator Alesi has sponsored numerous bills aimed at protecting children from dangerous toxins, including legislation that would remove lead and cadmium from toys, novelty items and costume jewelry, and legislation that established a Children's Environmental Health Advocacy Committee to assist state agencies and schools in removing toxic cleaning agents from our schools.

Senator Alesi's bill to prohibit the use of bisphenol-A (BPA) and other phthalates from baby bottles and pacifiers received national attention and has become the model for federal legislation. Also, Senator Alesi previously introduced "Safe Playground" legislation that eliminated chromate copper arsenate (CCA) from pressure-treated lumber once commonly used for playgrounds.

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