



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

Mayer and Otis Pass Legislation Requiring Automated External Defibrillator Implementation Plans for Camps and Youth Sports

SENATOR SHELLEY B. MAYER June 9, 2023

Albany, NY - State Assemblyman Steve Otis (AD 91) and State Senator Shelley B. Mayer (SD 37) announced the passage of their bill, A.366A/S.7424, in both houses of the New York State legislature. This legislation will require camps and youth sports programs to adopt a plan to provide automated external defibrillator (AED) equipment at camps and youth sports games and practices.

The legislation is designed to address the issue of sudden cardiac arrest, the leading cause of death for young people. Sudden cardiac arrest has a 90% fatality rate, but those outcomes can be improved when CPR and AED response occurs within three minutes of the episode. But this equipment is often not always available. While AED equipment is already required in school buildings, this legislation applies to non-school settings. It is estimated that between 7,000 and 14,000 youth sudden cardiac arrests occur nationwide each year.

This measure will require that every camp or youth sports program establish and submit an AED implementation plan to the Department of Health, which describes how AEDs will be made available at every camp, game, or practice and how at least one employee, volunteer, coach, or other qualified adult, who has completed an AED training course, will be present. By ensuring that AEDs are available in camps, in gyms, and on the fields, lives will be saved.

The issue was brought to the attention of Assemblyman Otis and Senator Mayer by Rye Brook residents Dana Colasante and Alice Schoen, whose family members experienced sudden cardiac arrest at youth sports events. Dana's husband and Alice's son were both saved because AED equipment was present and used immediately. Most families are not as fortunate.

Senator Mayer said, "I am very pleased the Senate and Assembly were able to take action to ensure the safety of young people and adults during camp and youth sports programs by passing legislation requiring AEDs at camps and sporting events. More than 7,000 children experience cardiac emergencies each year, and too many times an AED is not available or its presence is unknown. By establishing AED plans for camp and youth sports programs, it will ensure confidence that in the event of SCA, AEDs are present and available. I want to thank the Colasante and Schoen families for bringing this matter to our attention and I thank my colleague Assemblyman Otis for sponsoring this legislation in the Assembly."

Assemblyman Otis said, "There is a tremendous gap in the public's understanding of the need for including AED equipment and protocols as part of standard youth sports first aid planning. We have the ability to prevent heart-breaking tragedies by making sure that camps and youth sports programs develop their own plans to make sure AED equipment and procedures are in place. This important legislation was made possible through the advocacy of Dana Colasante and Alice Schoen who are dedicated to making sure lives are saved. This bill is another public health and safety victory in which Senator Mayer and I have combined efforts."

Dana and Alice formed an advocacy group, Saving Active Hearts, to educate the youth sports community about sudden cardiac arrest and what steps groups can take to have the necessary equipment and protocols available.

Dana Colasante and Alice Schoen, in a joint statement, said, “We are absolutely thrilled that this life-saving legislation to require camps and youth sports programs to establish an AED implementation plan has passed the legislature. We are so grateful to the bill sponsors Assemblyman Otis and Senator Mayer for taking on this initiative to author and sponsor the bill. They have both been extremely supportive of our Saving Active Hearts mission to protect young athletes from dying from sudden cardiac arrest since we started this initiative four years ago.”

The issue gained new attention with Damar Hamlin’s near-death experience in January during the Buffalo Bills/Cincinnati Bengals game. The goal of this legislative effort is to have this equipment available at all youth sports games and practices. Even in school settings, the awareness of the availability of equipment that is already on-site needs to be improved.

The American Heart Association (AHA) reported in 2018 that there are more than 356,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests annually in the United States, nearly 90 percent of which are fatal. Death can result within minutes from cardiac arrest if proper steps-such as performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and using an automated external defibrillator (AED)-to shock the heart and restore a normal heart rhythm are not taken immediately. Data from 2019 shows that 38.3% of cases are witnessed by a layperson, and 12.7% by an EMS provider. Trained non-medical personnel can use AEDs, which are simplified and portable electronic medical devices, to treat a person in cardiac arrest using voice prompts, lights, and text messages to walk the responder through the steps. Sports-related SCAs account for 39% of SCAs in children ages 18 years old or younger.