

The Honorable Tammie Wilson
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 412
Juneau, AK 99801-1185

Dear Representative Wilson,

I represent three entities that fully endorse your proposal to remove impediments in state law to the provision of automatic external defibrillators, or AEDs, in public places. The Loren Marshall Foundation through the “Big Wild Heart of Alaska” provides advocacy, education and support for reducing death from out of hospital cardiac arrest (OOHCA) in Alaska. The Heart Rescue Project of Washington-Oregon-Alaska has received a five-year grant from the Medtronic Philanthropy to improve outcomes from OOHCA in our respective states by 50%. Our methods target improved bystander CPR and enhanced availability and use of public access defibrillators. The Anchorage Fire Department and Anchorage Area wide EMS have strived for years to identify AEDs in the community and to enhance community use of the devices. We believe that by removing conditions for immunity for building owners and institutions, more AEDs will be made accessible to the public and that our constituents will be better served.

AEDs are modern, automated medical devices that can be safely used by an untrained bystander to restore a normal cardiac rhythm in someone in sudden cardiac arrest. When it is turned on, the device provides step-by-step aural and textual instructions on how to attach and use the device. These devices have an impressive success rate for people in certain cardiac rhythms in a witnessed cardiac arrest.

The use of AEDs is currently covered by Alaska’s Good Samaritan law (AS 09.65.090), which is designed to encourage would-be rescuers to take action without fear of litigation. However, Alaska’s Good Samaritan law attaches conditions to building owners and institutions that provide AEDs (AS 09.65.087). These conditions include requirements to provide training, maintenance, a means to notify 9-1-1, and registering the device(s) with emergency medical services.

Providing training and maintaining AEDs, as well as other measures, are good and necessary. However, we’re finding that large institutions can’t confidently assure that each of the conditions can be reliably met, therefore exposing them to liability and discouraging the provision of AEDs. Removing these conditions would increase the number of AEDs available in public places. As is currently true under the Good Samaritan law, building owners and institutions would still be liable for gross negligence.

Thank you for bringing this bill forward for the safety and welfare of Alaskans.

Best Regards,



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Principal Investigator Alaska, Heart Rescue Project
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