

January 17, 2024

Written Testimony for the House Committee on Education

Proponent testimony regarding House Bill 2494

Amanda Herrman, mother of Reagan Herrman (Reagan's Story)

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Reagan Herrman's family and the community of Emporia.

Chairman Thomas and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to share our life-changing event to support House Bill 2494 related to Cardiac Emergency Response Plans in schools.

On behalf of my family and community, I would like to share Reagan's story that occurred July 16, 2023. Reagan was playing basketball in the Sunflower State Games at Washburn University. During the game, Reagan came out and said she needed to catch her breath. After sitting down, she fell to the floor. She was unresponsive and turning blue. Several heroic people leaped into action beginning CPR and running to get an AED. She received two full cycles of compressions and one shock was delivered. After a terrifying four minutes, Reagan began breathing. Reagan was airlifted to Children's Mercy and spent seven days in the Cardiac ICU. After multiple failed tests, the doctors were able to diagnose Reagan with CPVT. CPVT (Catecholaminergic Polymorphic Ventricular Tachycardia) is an inherited cardiac condition that causes sudden rhythm disturbances, called arrhythmias, in otherwise healthy children. Often there are no signs of heart problems until sudden cardiac arrest. Her story is closely connected to the House Bill 2494. The Bill 2494 supports adding these policies to make sure that schools in the state of Kansas are prepared to respond to cardiac emergencies. Reagan's life was saved that day because the following situations occurred:

1. Reagan's cardiac arrest happened at a location that had AEDs available and trained personnel that completed CPR and administered the AED to shock her heart.
2. A plan was in place to evacuate the gymnasium so that the appropriate personnel could reach Reagan to administer life saving procedures.
3. There was effective and timely communication between law enforcement agencies and emergency medical services.
4. Continued communication with Washburn University provided the AED data to Children's Mercy to help accurately diagnose what happened during the cardiac arrest.
5. USD 253 responded to Reagan's event by implementing training for school personnel and coaches, adding 14 new AEDs to the buildings and 120 signs to help identify and locate the nearest AED equipment. They're also running crisis drills that include local emergency medical services.
6. Project Adam is working in close connection with the school district to make sure it is following all the procedures to become a Heart Safe school district.

It is our hope that Reagan's story can serve as a catalyst for change in our state's approach to AED Accessibility. While schools are required to have them, the location of the AEDs within schools can vary. We must advocate for the placement of AEDs in, or right outside of every gym and sports facility, ensuring that these devices are readily available to protect our students and athletes. Reagan's experience underscores the critical importance of this initiative. Our family feels blessed for the fortunate outcome that day, knowing that many other families may not have such a story to tell. Thank you for taking the time to listen to Reagan's story. I am available to answer any questions at the appropriate time.