TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.2386 AND S.1489
AN ACT RELATIVE TO IMPROVING THE OUTCOMES FOR SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH
NOVEMBER 15, 2021

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) wishes to be recorded in support H.2386 and S.1489, An Act Relative to Improving the Outcomes For Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

The MMS is a professional association of over 25,000 physicians, residents, and medical students across all clinical disciplines, organizations, and practice settings.

Sudden cardiac death is one of the leading causes of natural death in the country. Approximately 350,000 cases occur each year outside of a hospital, and the survival rate is less than 12 percent. According to the American Heart Association, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is a key to survival in sudden cardiac arrest. CPR can double or triple the chances of survival.¹

Telecommunicators, including call takers and dispatchers, are the true first responders and a critical link in the cardiac arrest chain of survival. Dispatcher assisted CPR is an effective and low-cost strategy to improve cardiac arrest survival, yet it is underutilized. Instituting the best practice and training for 911 answering staff so that they can effectively communicate with emergency callers who have witnessed a cardiac arrest can save as many as 500 Massachusetts residents each year.² This legislation would require all 911 telecommunicators that provide dispatch for emergency medical conditions shall be required to be trained utilizing the most current nationally recognized emergency cardiovascular care guidelines, in high-quality Telephone-CPR. The instruction shall incorporate recognition protocols for out of hospital cardiac arrest, compression-only CPR instructions for callers, and continuous education.

Thank you for your consideration, the Medical Society respectfully urges a favorable report on H.2386/S.1489.

² https://commonwealthmagazine.org/opinion/bystander-cpr-key-to-surviving-cardiac-arrest/