



# MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

*Every physician matters, each patient counts.*

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.556, H. 572, & S. 447  
LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE CPR AS A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION  
REQUIREMENT  
BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
July 21, 2025**

**The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) wishes to be recorded in support of H.556, H. 572, and S. 447.** While the bills vary slightly in language, each would require high school students in Massachusetts to receive hands-on instruction in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) use as a requirement for graduation.

The MMS is a professional association of over 24,000 physicians, residents, and medical students across all clinical disciplines, organizations, and practice settings. The Medical Society is committed to advocating on behalf of patients, for a better health care system, and on behalf of physicians, to help them provide the best care possible. MMS policy affirms that CPR training should be a graduation requirement in Massachusetts high schools. Accordingly, we support H.556, H. 572, and S.447, which align directly with that position, and would encourage that any legislation should provide accommodation for students with disabilities in CPR training to ensure a more inclusive and equitable learning environment where every student has the chance to develop essential life-saving skills.

As physicians, we see firsthand the devastating effects of sudden cardiac arrest, and the lifesaving potential of early intervention. In the United States, more than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur annually, with nearly 90% resulting in death.<sup>1</sup> Yet, immediate CPR can double or even triple a person's chances of survival.<sup>2</sup> Too often, however, bystanders are unprepared to help, and survival rates remain unacceptably low. By ensuring that every high school graduate in the Commonwealth receives basic CPR instruction, we can change this reality.

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<sup>1</sup> Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2022 Update: A Report From the American Heart Association. <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000001052>

<sup>2</sup> American Heart Association. What is CPR? <https://cpr.heart.org/en/resources/what-is-cpr>



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Providing CPR training to students is a simple, evidence-based step that empowers the next generation with lifesaving skills. The American Heart Association recommends CPR education in schools as a key public health strategy.<sup>3</sup> Studies show that students can learn CPR effectively in a single class period using compression-only techniques and accessible instructional tools, such as manikins and video-based training.<sup>4</sup> Programs can be integrated into health, physical education, or science curricula with minimal disruption.<sup>5</sup>

Importantly, this legislation would also advance health equity. Embedding CPR training in public schools ensures that all students—regardless of income, geography, or background—have access to this critical education. Research shows that bystander CPR is less likely to be performed in low-income or predominantly minority communities, where access to training has historically lagged.<sup>6</sup> These bills help close that gap. Beyond emergency response, CPR training fosters health literacy among young people. There are countless stories from across the country of teenagers using CPR to save lives, demonstrating what is possible when we equip youth with the right tools.

More than 40 states have passed similar laws, recognizing that teaching CPR in schools is a commonsense public health measure.<sup>7</sup> It is time for Massachusetts to join them and make this lifesaving, evidence-based education part of every student's academic journey. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to advance such legislation. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

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<sup>3</sup> KIDS SAVE LIVES: Basic Life Support Education for Schoolchildren: A Narrative Review and Scientific Statement From the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation.

<https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000001128>

<sup>4</sup> American Heart Association. CPR & First Aid. Emergency cardiovascular care.

<https://cpr.heart.org/en/training-programs/community-programs/cpr-in-schools>

<sup>5</sup> My CPR Now. Incorporating CPR Training in Health Education

<https://cprcertificationnow.com/blogs/mycpr-now-blog/incorporating-cpr-training-in-health-education#:~:text=Strategic%20Inclusion:%20Health%20education%20specialists,in%20a%20controlled%20supportive%20environment>

<sup>6</sup> American Heart Association. Black, Hispanic adults less likely to receive CPR, especially in public

<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2022/05/13/black-hispanic-adults-less-likely-to-receive-cpr-especially-in-public#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20statement%2C%20only,to%20be%20taught%2C%20she%20said>

<sup>7</sup> American Heart Association. CPR in Schools Legislation Map. <https://cpr.heart.org/en/training-programs/community-programs/cpr-in-schools/cpr-in-schools-legislation-map>