

February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026



## American Heart Association 2026 Joint Health Budget Testimony: Strengthening Cardiac Emergency Readiness in New York State

Dear Honorable members of the New York State Joint Health Budget Committee,

The American Heart Association is one of the nation's oldest and largest non-profit organizations. Over our 100-year history, the American Heart Association has been fighting heart disease and stroke and helping families and communities thrive. Nearly 90% of out hospital sudden cardiac arrests are fatal<sup>1</sup>, making it a leading cause of death in New York State. In this year's budget New York State has the unique opportunity to support initiatives that have the potential to improve health and cardiac outcomes across the state.

The American Heart Association applauds Governor Hochul's commitment to improving cardiac safety in her FY27 budget proposal to strengthen cardiac emergency readiness. In conjunction with the Governor's proposal, the American Heart Association also requests for the following life-saving investments to be made: require all 9-11 dispatchers to be trained in delivering CPR instructions over the phone (TCPR), funding the implementation of cardiac emergency response plans in schools (CERPs), and funding the implementation of CPR in schools' education.

Our organization is a strong supporter of requiring all 9-11 dispatchers in the state to be trained to give CPR instructions over the phone, which is known as Telecommunicator CPR training or TCPR and allocating at least \$2.5 million in funding for the implementation of this training requirement. We also supported establishing Cardiac Emergency Response Plans (CERPs) as part of their school safety plan, also known as Desha's law which took effect on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026 and requiring all public high school seniors to learn hands-only CPR as a

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<sup>1</sup> Virani SS, Alonso A, Benjamin EJ, et al. Heart disease and stroke statistics—2020 update: a report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2020 Mar 3;E139-596.

graduation requirement which took effect in 2015. To further the impact of Desha's law and CPR in schools' education we respectfully request \$2.5 million dollars in funding to support implementation of Desha's law and \$1 million in funding to support CPR in schools' education. Investing in TCPR, Desha's law and CPR in schools' education directly aligns with Governor Hochul's proposal to "Strengthen Cardiac Emergency Readiness" throughout New York State by ensuring more individuals are ready to respond when there is a cardiac emergency, more people are trained in the lifesaving skill of CPR, plans are in place to address cardiac emergencies and that AEDs are readily available in our school communities.

### Telecommunicator CPR (TCPR) Training and Funding

Every year, more than 350,000 Americans fall victim to out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA)<sup>2</sup>. Unfortunately, only about 1 in 10 victims survive this dramatic event and for every minute without CPR intervention survival rates drop by 10 percent<sup>3</sup>. By requiring all 9-1-1 dispatchers in the state to be trained in giving high-quality CPR instructions over the phone it will save lives. High-quality TCPR strengthens the chain of survival and gives emergency medical responders a better chance of success when they arrive on the scene of cardiac arrest.

The American Heart Association strongly recommends that the FY2027 State budget include the following measures:

- Require all 9-1-1 dispatchers to be trained in TCPR that follows nationally recognized guidelines and invests at least \$2.5 million to support the training and implementation of this requirement.

This initiative directly aligns with the Governor's proposal to strengthen cardiac emergency readiness by enabling more lay bystanders to be lifesavers when an emergency occurs. Calling 9-11 and lay rescuer CPR are the first two links in the chain of survival and provide the foundation for subsequent treatment and are critical for successful resuscitation.

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<sup>2</sup> Virani SS, Alonso A, Benjamin EJ, et al. Heart disease and stroke statistics—2020 update: a report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2020 Mar 3;E139-596.

<sup>3</sup> *Myths and facts*. Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation. (n.d.). <https://www.sca-aware.org/about-sudden-cardiac-arrest/myths-and-facts>

## Desha's Law Funding – Requires Cardiac Emergency Response Plans (CERPs) in Schools

In 2025, the New York State legislature passed Desha's law which requires all public schools to develop cardiac emergency response plans. The law also requires schools to create cardiac emergency response teams, comprised of trained staff to respond to emergencies and have accessible and clearly marked AEDs throughout the school campus and sports facilities.

The FY2027 budget offers a significant opportunity for the state of New York to enhance existing school safety by investing in Desha's law and ensuring schools can meet this new requirement. This directly aligns with the Governor's plans to invest in strengthening cardiac emergency readiness by ensuring our school communities are cardiac safe.

The American Heart Association strongly recommends that the FY2027 State budget include the following measures to increase school safety and preparedness to address incidents of sudden cardiac arrest:

- Allocate at least \$2.5 million in funding with priority of funds given to high needs schools (Title 1 schools). Funding can be used for resources need for implementing CERPs, such as, but not limited to purchasing and maintaining AEDs, proper AED signage, and staff training.

Preparedness and swift action during cardiac emergencies are critical, particularly in schools where children and our community members spend a significant portion of their time.

### Cost Justification

A \$2.5 million investment is a modest price to pay for the potential to save lives. The recommended full funding for implementing CERPs statewide is \$10 million by our account, but the minimum is 25%, which is \$2.5 million.

Requiring schools to adopt Cardiac Emergency Response Plans and providing adequate funding is a necessary step toward protecting the health and safety of our children and communities.

We respectfully urge you to allocate appropriate funding to this initiative. Together, we can create safer school environments that protect and value the lives of New York's children.

### CPR in Schools Funding

The American Heart Association has worked to pass laws that will assure all students are trained in life-saving CPR before they graduate high school. In 2015, New York State made the pivotal decision to require CPR education as part of the state high school curriculum as a graduation requirement. The decision now equips all public high school high school graduating seniors in the state with an essential life-saving skill.

The FY2027 budget can make a historic invest in ensuring more New Yorker's are trained in the lifesaving skill of CPR by funding CPR in schools' education. By ensuring almost 200,000 New York high school seniors have access to equitable CPR training we are building a stronger and safer New York.

The American Heart Association strongly recommends that FY2027 budget include the following measure to ensure equitable access to CPR training for all graduating seniors as required by the CPR in schools' law:

- Allocate at least \$1 million in funding to support schools implementing hands-only CPR training graduation education requirement.

We respectfully urge you to invest in this life-saving initiative to give our schools the resources to train their students in hands-only CPR.

With Heart,

Brianna Durkee

Government Relations Director

American Heart Association