

Support funding for Automatic External Defibrillation (AEDs)

BACKGROUND

Rural communities face many challenges in responding to medical emergencies, including delayed response times due to the distance emergency response vehicles must travel to reach victims. The federal government can help raise cardiac arrest survival rates by making sure the first people to arrive at an emergency are equipped with AEDs. Without this technology, less than 5% of cardiac arrest victims survive.

Last year the Rural Access to Emergency Care Act was signed into law authorizing the federal government to expand access to AEDs. Congress must act now to support rural areas by providing funding for this program in the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (Labor/HHS) Appropriations bill.

Last year, Senators Collins and Feingold and Representatives Deal and Kind worked with other members of Congress to pass this landmark bipartisan legislation. The bill allows rural communities to apply for grants that will help fund the purchase of AEDs. This year, a number of members of Congress, including the Senate Rural Health Caucus, have asked the Labor/HHS subcommittee to fund the measure.

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION POSITION

The American Heart Association strongly supports regulatory and legislative measures aimed at ensuring prompt access to appropriate quality medical care. The Association will continue to work with Congress in an effort to positively impact the chain of survival for heart disease and stroke patients.

The Association is calling on Congress to appropriate \$12.5 million in this year's Labor/HHS bill for the Rural AED grant program.

FACTS/STATISTICS

- Approximately 220,000 Americans die each year from sudden cardiac arrest – a condition where the electrical rhythms of the heart malfunction, causing the heart to suddenly stop beating normally.
- About 600 Americans die of cardiac arrest every day.
- Only about five percent of sudden cardiac arrest victims survive nationally.
- A strong chain of survival can increase cardiac arrest survival rates to as high as 50 percent.
- If every community could achieve a 20 percent cardiac arrest survival rate, an estimated 45,000-50,000 people could be saved each year.