

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 278

Short Title:   The Smart Heart Act. (Public)

Sponsors:    Senators Corbin and Hanig (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:   Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 13, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO REQUIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO DEVELOP CARDIAC EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE PLANS AND TO REQUIRE THE PLACEMENT OF ONE AUTOMATIC  
EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) IN EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Article 25A of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 115C-375.25. Cardiac emergency response plans.**

(a) The governing body of each public school unit shall develop a cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) that addresses the appropriate use of school personnel to respond to incidents involving individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency while on school grounds. The CERP shall integrate evidence-based core elements, such as those recommended by the American Heart Association or nationally recognized recommendations or core elements. At a minimum, the CERP shall contain the following core elements:

(1) Establish a cardiac emergency response team.

(2) Describe how the response team will be activated in response to a cardiac emergency.

(3) Identify the school staff that will receive annual training on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and use of Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs). At a minimum, school nurses and any faculty with supervisory responsibility over students in any athletic situation shall be included in this training.

(4) Annual practice drills for the response team.

(5) Integrating local emergency service providers with the plan.

(b) The CERP shall be reviewed and updated annually.

(c) School officials shall work directly with local emergency service providers to integrate the CERP into the community's EMS responder protocols.

(d) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules for the installation, use, and maintenance of AEDs in public school units. At a minimum, the rules shall include provisions for the following:

(1) Installation and placement of at least one AED in each school in a public school unit.

(2) Appropriate AED placement shall be determined from guidelines set by the American Heart Association or an organization focused on emergency cardiovascular care but, at a minimum, shall be identified with appropriate



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signage, be in an unlocked location, and able to be placed on a victim within three minutes.

(3) Implementation of an appropriate training course for public school personnel in the use of AEDs, including the role of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.

(4) Proper maintenance and testing of the AEDs.

(5) Coordination with appropriate licensed professionals in the oversight of training on the AEDs."

**SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(70) Cardiac emergency response plan (CERP). – Local boards of education shall adopt a CERP, including the installation, maintenance, and use of automatic external defibrillators in accordance with G.S. 115C-375.25."

**SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 115C-150.12C is amended by adding a new subdivision to

read:

"(37) Cardiac emergency response plan (CERP). – The board of trustees shall adopt a CERP, including the installation, maintenance, and use of automatic external defibrillators in accordance with G.S. 115C-375.25."

**SECTION 2.(c)** G.S. 115C-218.75 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(p) Cardiac emergency response plan (CERP). – Charter schools shall adopt a CERP, including the installation, maintenance, and use of automatic external defibrillators in accordance with G.S. 115C-375.25."

**SECTION 2.(d)** G.S. 115C-238.66 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(23) Cardiac emergency response plan (CERP). – Regional schools shall adopt a CERP, including the installation, maintenance, and use of automatic external defibrillators in accordance with G.S. 115C-375.25."

**SECTION 2.(e)** G.S. 116-11 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(15) Cardiac emergency response plan (CERP). – The Board of Governors shall adopt a CERP, including the installation, maintenance, and use of automatic external defibrillators in accordance with G.S. 115C-375.25, for any public secondary schools under the Board's jurisdiction."

**SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year to be allocated by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to the governing body of each public school unit to support the schools in purchasing AEDs, developing cardiac emergency response plans as required under G.S. 115C-375.25, as enacted by this act, and developing emergency action plans under G.S. 115C-407.58.

**SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2025, and applies beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.