

AD HOC COALITION TO SAVE LIVES THROUGH PUBLIC ACCESS TO DEFIBRILLATION

March 28, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Senate Labor-HHS-Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The undersigned organizations of the **Ad Hoc Coalition To Save Lives Through Public Access To Defibrillation** thank you for being the champion of HRSA's Rural and Community Access to Emergency Devices Program. During the FY 2012 Labor-HHS appropriations process, we urge you to continue to champion this Program by restoring it to the FY 2005 level of \$8.927 million when 47 states received resources for this life-saving competitively awarded initiative. In FY 2010 only 21 states received funding for this Program. Unfortunately, Iowa was not one of the funded states in FY 2010.

An appropriation of \$8.927 million for HRSA's Rural and Community Access to Emergency Devices Program will save more lives of victims of sudden cardiac arrest, a particularly deadly form of heart disease. Funding for this Program is used to purchase automated external defibrillators (AEDs), train both lay rescuers and first responders in their use, and place AEDs in public areas where sudden cardiac arrests are likely to occur. Sadly, survival rates for out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest victims remain at 8%. Yet, immediate CPR and early defibrillation, using an AED, can more than double a patient's chance of survival. Communities with aggressive AED programs have achieved survival rates of nearly 40%.

Since the enactment of the Rural AED Act, about \$32 million has been invested in rural areas. Yet, since FY 2006, this Program has been on life-support. Despite insufficient budgets, from September 2007 to August 2008, 3,051 AEDs were purchased and 10,287 people were trained. Also, 795 sudden cardiac arrest victims were saved between August 1, 2008 and July 31, 2010,

The need for this Program is enormous. First responders, schools, churches, recreation facilities and nursing homes in rural areas and communities across the nation eagerly await funds from these life-saving public health service grant programs. Requests for these AED grant dollars have exceeded the limited funds made available. For example, in FY 2009, less than 8% of the applicants were funded.

Please help save lives by restoring HRSA's Rural and Community Access to Emergency Devices Program to its FY 2005 level of \$8.927 million in the FY 2012 Labor-HHS Appropriation bill. If you have questions, call Claudia Louis at the American Heart Association – (202) 785-7906. Thank you

Sincerely,

24-7 EMS
24-7 Fire
Advocates for EMS
American Ambulance Association
American College of Cardiology
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American Heart Association
American Red Cross
American Safety & Health Institute
Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc.
Association of Critical Care Transport
Cardiac Science Corporation
Congressional Fire Services Institute
Emergency Nurses Association
First Safety Institute
GotoAID
Heart Rhythm Society

HealthSafe Solutions, Inc.
Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Association
Lifework, Inc.
MEDIC First Aid
Medtronic, Inc.
National Rural Health Association
National Safety Council
National Volunteer Fire Council
Philips Healthcare
Project ADAM
Project S.A.V.E., Atlanta
Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes Foundation
Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association
Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation
Weil Institute of Critical Care Medicine
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease