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April 26, 2019

Dear Member of the Pennsylvania Legislature:

The Pennsylvania College of Emergency Physicians (PACEP), representing over 1700 Emergency Physicians across the Commonwealth, encourage you to review and support Senate Bill 115, which standardizes education for Pennsylvania high schoolers in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). This legislation asks the Departments of Education and Health to develop a model curriculum for CPR education for high school students.

Over 326,000 patients suffer sudden cardiac arrest nationally each year. Bystander (layperson) CPR is an important intervention that can double neurologically intact survival for these patients (1, 2). Unfortunately, fewer than 20% of Americans feel that they are currently trained in CPR (3), and a majority of PA high schools do not have a defined curriculum to teach this skill (4). In other constituencies, an increase in the proportion of the community trained in CPR is associated with an increase in survival from sudden cardiac arrest (5).

Senate Bill 115 is a reasonable initiative to begin training the young people of the Commonwealth in this life-saving skill. We, as emergency physicians, see the consequence of patients not receiving layperson CPR on a daily basis. It truly is a matter of life and death. Forty states and the District of Columbia presently mandate CPR training in schools (6). This legislation would be a step towards strengthening Pennsylvania communities and saving the lives of Pennsylvanians. Therefore, PACEP supports SB 115 and is available at any point to answer your questions regarding this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Arvind Venkat, MD, FACEP
President, Pennsylvania College of Emergency Physicians

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