

## **AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) AWARENESS IN SCHOOLS**

Adopted by Convention Delegates, April 2011

- WHEREAS,** The California State PTA seeks to promote public policy and actions that protect the health and safety of all children and families; and
- WHEREAS,** Each year there are an estimated 295,000 out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrests (SCA) in the United States affecting every age, fitness level, gender and race, killing more than breast cancer, lung cancer and AIDS combined; and
- WHEREAS,** It is estimated that in the United States, only 5 percent to 7 percent of those who experience sudden cardiac arrest survive; and
- WHEREAS,** Survival rates are reduced by approximately 10 percent for each minute that passes after the onset of sudden cardiac arrest; and
- WHEREAS,** Sudden cardiac arrest is reversible in most victims if it is treated within a few minutes with defibrillation to restore a normal heartbeat; and
- WHEREAS,** California Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 57 – Relative to automated external defibrillator programs, urges all California K-12 public schools to implement an automated external defibrillator program; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That California State PTA urges its units, councils, and districts to encourage local schools and school districts to support the acquisition of AEDs for the school campus; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urges its units, councils, and districts to encourage local schools and school districts to implement Public Access Defibrillator Programs that include maintenance, testing and designated site staff training requirements; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urges its units, councils and districts to encourage local schools and school districts to collaborate with organizations and foundations to assist with the purchase of AEDs and the implementation of Public Access Defibrillator Programs that include training, testing and records management.

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**BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is an electrical malfunction of the heart. Usually the first sign is collapse. Brain damage begins within four to six minutes. The only effective treatment for SCA is defibrillation. An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a simple, small, portable device approved by the FDA for use by laypersons. The AED restores the victim's heart to a normal rhythm.

Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) Programs place AEDs in visible, accessible, public locations. SCA can happen to anyone at any time, with no warning. It is estimated that one in every 500 children have an undetected heart condition, and often the first sign is SCA.

Time is critical. In most cases the question of life or death is determined before professional help arrives.

PTAs throughout California can protect the safety and well-being of children by raising awareness about AEDs in schools and by urging school districts to implement PAD programs.