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ABC MISSION:

To promote the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease including stroke, in Blacks and other minorities and to achieve health equity for all through the elimination of disparities.

May 3, 2023

The Honorable Shelia Cherfilus-McCormick
242 Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bill Posey
2150 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Cherfilus-McCormick and Congressman Posey:

Because every second counts when someone experiences sudden cardiac arrest, the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) endorses the *Access to AEDs Act* (H.R. 2370) and applauds your leadership to ensure every school in America has the resources to purchase and maintain an automated external defibrillator (AED) and to train students, coaches, teachers and other staff in the use of AEDs and CPR.

The cardiac arrest that Buffalo Bills player Damar Hamlin suffered has led to a renewed appreciation of the importance of bystander CPR and AED training in all communities, including our nation's schools.

More than 356,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests (OHCAs) are reported annually in the United States, and an estimated 70 to 90 percent of people experiencing OHCA die before reaching the hospital.¹ CPR and use of an AED within minutes of OHCA can dramatically raise survival rates.² Survival and one-year outcomes after OHCA arrest were best when initial defibrillation with an AED was provided by bystanders, not paramedics.³

Making grants available to schools for CPR training has the potential to make a difference in minority communities. Unfortunately, the relative likelihood of getting bystander CPR at home is 26 percent lower for Black and Hispanic people than for Whites, and the likelihood of bystander CPR for cardiac arrests in public is 37 percent lower for Blacks and Hispanics than for Whites.⁴ However, state laws mandating CPR training in high schools is associated with a higher likelihood of bystander CPR for OHCA and this leads to improvements in outcomes following cardiac arrest.

A 2015 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report provided policy strategies for improving patient outcomes for cardiac arrest, which included requiring AED placement and CPR and AED training in schools.⁵ More than seven years have passed since the IOM issued its recommendations, and, today, still less than half of all states have some type of AED school requirements. Even in states where

¹ Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) State Law Fact Sheet. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/dhds/policy_resources/pad_slfs.htm. Accessed April 8, 2023.

² Ibid.

³ Haskins B, Nehme Z, Andrew E, et al. One-year quality-of-life outcomes of cardiac arrest survivors by initial defibrillation provider. *Heart Published Online First*: 16 March 2023. doi: 10.1136/heartjnl-2021-320559

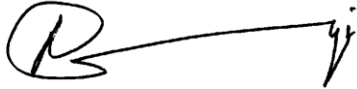
⁴ Garcia RA, Spertus JA, Girotra S, et al. Racial and ethnic differences in bystander CPR for witnessed cardiac arrest. *N Engl J Med* 2022;387:1569-1578.

⁵ IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2015. Strategies to improve cardiac arrest survival: A time to act. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/21723>.

AED placement and AED and CPR are required, under-resourced schools would benefit from grants that this legislation would make available to elementary and secondary schools for AED and CPR education and training, AED placement and maintenance, and training to school athletic department personnel so they can identify student athletes who are at greatest risk of sudden cardiac arrest.

Please include the ABC as an endorsing organization of the *Access to AED Act*. The ABC and its members stand ready as a resource to you, and we commit our advocacy resources to passing this important legislation this year. For questions or more information, please contact Camille Bonta, ABC policy consultant, at cbonta@summithealthconsulting.com or (202) 320-3658.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Onwuanyi', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Anekwe E. Onwuanyi, MD
President
Association of Black Cardiologist