

February 17, 2022

Katie Pertiet
903 Cedarday Drive
Bel Air, MD 21015
410.926.8555

kpertiet@clickcreativegroup.com

****Support****

I'm Katie and I'm a survivor of sudden cardiac arrest in a Maryland fitness facility. I am a survivor, not because the fitness facility I was working out at was prepared for a cardiac emergency, they were not. I am a survivor not because they had and were trained to use an AED, they did not. I am a survivor not because they were CPR certified and had first aid training, they did not. The only reason I am a survivor is because there was a dr. taking the class I was in and knew I was in distress.

Only 7% of people who suffer cardiac arrest outside of a hospital survive. Performing CPR and use of an AED can double or triple the chance of survival outside a hospital. Timing and quick response is the difference between life and death.

When someone is in cardiac distress time is critical. The facility owner had asked someone to call my husband to come pick me up. The dr. knew I needed an ambulance and got one there quickly to get me to the hospital where I flat lined and was shocked multiple times to come back to life. Without her knowledge I would not have received the critical care I needed soon enough to survive.

Left untreated, out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) will rapidly result in death in all victims. In an emergency, there are 4 tasks that should be done to help make a difference between life and death:

1. Recognition of cardiac arrest;
2. Call for assistance, likely by dialing 911;
3. Performing some form of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR); and
4. Summoning and applying an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) to the victim's bare chest. 1

Workers in all fitness facilities need to be educated about these steps and be able to recognize the signs of distress in order to save lives.

Fitness facility owners and employees can make a very positive impact on this otherwise dismal outcome. To provide the most optimal opportunity for meaningful survival from OHCA, both interventions should be performed as soon as possible. The potential lifesaving advantages of AEDs in public locations have been investigated extensively. In a large number of scientific studies considering the use of the automatic external defibrillator, survival increased by approximately 25%. 1

AEDs are safe and relatively easy to operate, even by untrained lay rescuers. Operation of the AED by lay rescuers is guided by audible prompts from the AED itself as well as graphical directions on the device. Although AED design differs somewhat by manufacturer, the basic elements of operation are the same. I worked at a health club in Illinois where it was required to be CPR and AED certified before I began teaching. I remember the AED class clearly and it was very easy to do and would not deliver a shock unless necessary.

Since my initial cardiac arrest nearly 5 years ago, I have continued to have health challenges that I never experienced before this event. I am fortunate for the quick response I received. As many who survive cardiac arrest are left with brain damage and debilitating physical challenges.

I appreciate you taking the time to truly consider the impact this bill has for the citizens of Maryland and the lives it could save. A single life is worth it. No one should lose their life because their fitness facility was not equipped to handle a cardiac emergency.