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New State Law Encourages Widespread Distribution of Public Access Defibrillators

Starting Hearts' Advocacy Efforts Help Achieve Important Legislation

Avon, Colo On May 22, Governor Jared Polis signed House Bill HB19-1183 into law (https://www.leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2019a_1183_signed.pdf). The bill encourages public and private organizations to accept donations of public access defibrillators and opens the door to greatly increase adoption of these lifesaving devices in communities throughout Colorado. In addition, the bill includes seed money to establish a grant program within the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to encourage financial donations for the purchase of defibrillators.

The bill was championed by Dylan Roberts, State Representative for House District 26, which encompasses Eagle and Routt counties. His counterpart in the State Senate, Senator Jeff Bridges, advanced the bill in the Senate chamber.

Starting Hearts, an Eagle County nonprofit dedicated to saving the lives of sudden cardiac arrest victims, played an active role in pursuit of this important legislation. Lynn Blake, founder and cardiac arrest survivor, testified in support of the bill before the House Health & Insurance Committee on March 6. Thereafter, Alan Himelfarb, Starting Hearts' Executive Director, testified in support of the bill before the Senate Health and Human Services on April 10. In a recent Facebook post, Representative Roberts said, "Thank you to Eagle County's Starting Hearts for helping to make this happen".

Blake said, "We are so thankful to Representative Roberts, Senator Bridges, and Governor Polis for this important legislation. A defibrillator saved my life, and placing more of these in public locations will save many precious lives. We are so pleased to have been part of the process and excited for what the future holds."

Himelfarb said, "While lifesaving defibrillators are becoming more mainstream, larger organizations often remain reluctant to make placements. With generous donations in-hand from private donors, institutions, and grant makers, we still face obstacles for highly trafficked public locations, such as supermarkets and big box stores. This legislation will greatly enhance our ability to place devices in locations such as these."

For further information, please contact:

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About Starting Hearts

Starting Hearts is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Avon, CO. Its mission is to save the lives of sudden cardiac arrest victims through free CPR and defibrillator education, widespread distribution of lifesaving defibrillators everywhere in public, activation of citizen first responders, and broad stakeholder cooperation in the communities we serve. Since inception in 2010, Starting Hearts has educated more than 18,000 citizens in lifesaving and leadership skills, as well as increased the number of defibrillators in Eagle County, CO to more than 400, or one for every 130 citizens, one of the highest per capita rates in the nation. The organization is now expanding its programs through affiliations across Colorado and encourages interested parties to contact us. For more information, please visit www.startinghearts.org.