



Wisconsin Advocates Rally for Cardiac Emergency Readiness in Schools and Postpartum Care

American Heart Association volunteers from across Wisconsin gathered at the State Capitol to support lifesaving policies

(MADISON, WI) April 16, 2025 – Advocates with the American Heart Association, devoted to a world of healthier lives for all, gathered in Madison on Tuesday to talk with legislators about the critical importance of swift and effective response to cardiac arrests and health care coverage for new moms. Advocates asked legislators to help ensure schools in Wisconsin are prepared to respond if someone experiences a cardiac arrest on school grounds and to extend health care coverage from 60 days to 12 months for postpartum moms.

Each year in the U.S., more than 350,000 people experience cardiac arrest outside of the hospital. It strikes suddenly and without warning, and survival oftentimes depends on whether the people nearby know what to do. Unfortunately, 9 out of 10 cardiac arrests result in death.

Speaking at Advocacy Day, Kayla Houle, a teacher from Kaukauna, shared her experience, “I was teaching social studies when all of a sudden I didn’t feel well. Moments later I collapsed, and I was in cardiac arrest. I am alive today because CPR was started quickly and an automated external defibrillator (AED) was nearby.”

“Cardiac arrests can happen anywhere, including in the classroom and on athletic fields,” Houle said. “Ensuring faculty and coaching staff are trained to respond and have lifesaving AEDs will save lives, just as it did mine”.

In addition, advocates talked with legislators about the importance of extending postpartum coverage for new moms in Wisconsin.

Annmae Minichello, mother of two from Middleton, shared her postpartum story of survival. Experiencing heart failure two days after returning home with her new baby, Annmae knows firsthand out how difficult the postpartum period can be, both physically and mentally.

“The circumstances with my pregnancy, daughters’ birth and heart failure took a significant toll on my mental wellbeing. I suffered from postpartum post-traumatic stress disorder and lived in constant anxiety that my heart was going to fail again”, said Minichello. “But five years later, with the support of my family, friends and medical team, my heart has fully recovered, and I am mostly healed from my trauma. We are now a family of four, following the birth of another beautiful daughter.”

“Cardiac risk can occur up to six months after pregnancy and recovering from the physical and emotional trauma requires so much more time,” Minichello said. “Having continuous access to healthcare for twelve months following the birth of a child can save the lives of the women we hold near and dear to our hearts.”

Need Action Now

Join the American Heart Association in advocating for longer, healthier lives. Constituents can contact their legislators today to let them know these policies are a top priority for their families and community. Learn more and get involved at yourethecure.org or text "WI" to 46839.

Additional Resources:

Downloadable b-roll, along with interviews/soundbytes is available via these link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1D63mjY-CgVIOYRj13XyMe2_bLEq9tFq

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About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. Dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities, the organization has been a leading source of health information for more than one hundred years. Supported by more than 35 million volunteers globally, we fund groundbreaking research, advocate for the public's health, and provide critical resources to save and improve lives affected by cardiovascular disease and stroke. By driving breakthroughs and implementing proven solutions in science, policy, and care, we work tirelessly to advance health and transform lives every day. Connect with us on heart.org, [Facebook](#), [X](#) or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

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heart.org and stroke.org