

Testimony for HB612 Lifesavers School Program Bill

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Eloria Carter, and I am currently a ninth grader at Glenelg High School enrolled in Health 1. I am coming before you today to share a personal experience that emphasizes the urgent need for the implementation of the Lifesavers School Program proposed in HB612.

Two years ago, while I was still at Glenwood Middle School, two students had seizures within a single week. The lack of preparedness among the immediate staff during one of these incidents shows the necessity for comprehensive training in handling emergencies.

During a seizure incident that took place during recess, the initial response from the staff was not enough. Without the presence of a trained professional, the recess monitors struggled to take appropriate action. In a moment of crisis, their solution was to place a jacket on the convulsing student. It wasn't until the Nurse arrived six minutes later that proper measures were taken – setting the student's head to the side and placing the jacket underneath to prevent choking or head injury.

This incident shows that relying solely on the Nurse for emergency situations is not enough. While my Health 1 class covers some aspects of first aid, including the use of a tourniquet, AED, and chest compressions, it falls short in addressing the wide range of potential medical emergencies. First aid training should extend beyond these basics, preparing students and staff for various scenarios they might encounter. The time it takes for someone trained to reach a medical emergency can be crucial, and every second without immediate first aid increases the risk of more serious harm.

The kids didn't know what was going on; they were panicking and confused. One of the students knew it was a seizure and told us after. First aid training can ensure that both students and staff are well informed about emergency procedures, reducing confusion and panic. In the future, I may be the only one around in an emergency. I want to be more prepared to help someone.

The Lifesaver bill would also help with mental health in the school. A lot of students and even myself struggled during Covid. I felt lonely and isolated. It took a while to get back my social abilities after Covid; I felt awkward and out of practice. Some of my friends really struggled with depression. The thing that got us through it is each other. Whenever my friends are struggling, they talk to their close friends; they don't talk to adults. A peer mentorship program would help high schoolers to be more comfortable talking about mental health and getting the help they need.

Offering training in schools, with the added incentive of counting towards service hours, could significantly increase enrollment. Imagine the positive impact if many students and staff were empowered to help each other in mental health and emergency situations. We can create a safer school environment. It's time to empower our school communities to act confidently in the face of emergencies that many of us will face.

Sincerely,

Eloria Carter