



Cardiomyopathy Health Education, Awareness, Research, and Training in the Schools (HEARTS) Act of 2017 (H.R. 3880)

Issue

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) claims the lives of more than 350,000 Americans each year, including more than 7,000 young people under the age of 18. Many children who suffer SCA have an undetected heart condition such as cardiomyopathy, a disease of the heart muscle that causes inflammation, a weakening of the muscle or change in the structure of the muscle. To help raise awareness of cardiomyopathy across the lifespan and identify undiagnosed children at risk of SCA, Representative Frank Pallone (D-NJ) introduced the Cardiomyopathy Health Education, Awareness, Research, and Training in the Schools (HEARTS) Act (H.R. 3880) in September 2017.

Bill Summary

The Cardiomyopathy HEARTS Act was first introduced by Representative Frank Pallone, Jr. in December 2011 and then Senators Robert Menendez (NJ) and Frank Lautenberg in February 2012. The bill was reintroduced in 2013 and 2015.

The new Cardiomyopathy HEARTS Act of 2017 seeks to address the needs of individuals affected by the disease by:

- **Developing educational materials and resources on cardiomyopathy.** These educational resources will be disseminated to school administrators, educators, and families and will include information on the signs and symptoms of cardiomyopathy, SCA risk factors, automated external defibrillator (AED) placement, CPR/AED training in schools, and implementation of a cardiac emergency response plan.
- **Establishing cardiomyopathy surveillance research at the CDC.** The bill directs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to collect and analyze data to identify the impact, prevalence, and natural history of cardiomyopathy, to develop evidence-based practices and guidelines for cardiomyopathy.
- **Assessing the current research needs and projects related to cardiomyopathy across the lifespan at the NIH.** The bill directs the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to evaluate and coordinate its current research so that there is a better understanding of the state of biomedical research as it relates to cardiomyopathy.

Background

Cardiomyopathy is a chronic disease of the heart muscle that can present in a variety of forms and may, in severe cases, lead to heart failure or sudden death. When cardiomyopathy occurs, the normal heart muscle can thicken, stiffen, thin out, or fill with fatty substances, which affects the heart's ability to pump blood through the body. The cause is not always known, and cardiomyopathy may progress undiagnosed. As many as 1 of 500 adults have cardiomyopathy.

Cardiomyopathy in children is especially serious and results in some of the worst pediatric cardiology outcomes. and Almost 40 percent of children die or require a heart transplant within two years of diagnosis, and cardiomyopathy is responsible for nearly one-half of all pediatric heart transplants, Pediatric cardiomyopathy is estimated to affect 30,000 children in the United States.

Support

The measure is supported by 23 organizations, including the American Heart Association, American College of Cardiology, Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation, Heart Rhythm Society, National Association of School Nurses, Parent Heart Watch, Citizen CPR Foundation, Mended Little Hearts, and Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation.