



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Lifesaving Legislation Receives Senate Approval

JAMES L. SEWARD February 14, 2011

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ALBANY, 02/14/11 – The New York State Senate today passed potentially lifesaving legislation (S.2387) that would allow emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to carry an automated external defibrillator (AED) in their personal vehicles.

“Clearing the way for trained first responders to carry AEDs at all times could be the difference between life and death for a heart attack patient,” Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta), Chairman of the Senate Insurance Committee said. **“By cutting away bureaucratic red-tape and ensuring trained emergency professionals have the tools they need, lives can be saved.”**

Current law does not permit EMTs to possess and use AEDs while they are off-duty, unless they are specifically licensed as a public access defibrillator provider.

“Particularly in rural parts of New York, EMTs are often first on the scene of an emergency – even when they are off-duty, and in the case of a cardiac emergency, every second counts,” Seward added.

“This measure is just common sense. If more trained life-savers have defibrillators on-hand, more lives can be saved,” Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos said. “In fact if just one person is saved, this bill would be worthwhile.”

The issue was first brought to Senator Seward's attention by the Cincinnati Emergency Squad when he was serving as chairman of the Senate Task Force on Volunteer Emergency Services.

“The Cincinnati first responders were carrying defibrillators as a way to provide quick emergency care when they responded directly to a scene,” Seward continued. **“In spite of the obvious benefits of having off-duty EMTs possess defibrillators, the Department of Health told the EMS squad it wasn’t legally permissible under current regulations.”**

Seward noted that EMTs are trained to use AEDs and that having them in more places is only a plus for saving lives in emergency situations.

The legislation passed the senate unanimously each year between 2005-2008.

The bill has been sent to the assembly.