

Submitted Testimony



American Heart Association
Testimony on the Proposed 2016-17 SFY Budget
Submitted January 25, 2016
To the
NYS Senate Finance and NYS Assembly Ways and Means Committees
Albany, New York

Senator Young and Assemblyman Farrell, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony outlining the state budget priorities of the American Heart Association / American Stroke Association in New York State. As you carefully consider the myriad of requests before your committees, please understand that our priorities reflect public health interventions that have been proven by sound science to diminish the death and disease from heart disease and stroke.

By way of background, the American Heart Association / American Stroke Association (AHA) is dedicated to building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular disease and stroke. As a voluntary health organization, we have further challenged ourselves to achieve what we term an Impact 2020 Goal by improving the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20% and reducing deaths from cardiovascular disease and stroke by 20% by the year 2020. This ambitious goal can only be achieved by enacting and implementing sound local, state and Federal public policy. Thus our priorities for consideration in the state budget this year include measures that will increase access to healthy food, decrease tobacco use and provide access to emergency cardiac care and stroke treatment. The AHA believes these budget funding priorities, further discussed below will advance our mission and, more importantly, benefit the health of New Yorkers.

Despite fairly recent advances in emergency cardiac care, decreases in smoking rates and improved stroke treatment, heart disease and stroke remain the #1 and #4 killers of New Yorkers. In 2013, the latest date for which figures are available, the New York State Department of Health reports that 43,112 people died from heart disease and 5,959 died from stroke¹. It is critically important that the state fund programs that will make an impact on these numbers and to that end, the AHA supports the following state budget allocations for SFY 2016-17.

¹ New York State Department of Health, Vital Statistics Data as of March 2015
https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/leadingcauses_death/nys_by_year.htm

Healthy Food Financing Initiative: 15M in New Funding to Reinstate Program The Healthy Corner Store Initiative: 3M in New Funding

For millions of people around the country—many of them children—the fast choice is the only choice when it comes to food. In order to provide increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables, New York State previously funded a Healthy Food and Healthy Communities Fund. The purpose of the Fund is to incentivize food retailers to locate in underserved communities, both Upstate and Downstate, in order to increase healthy food access. The American Heart Association and our many partners believe reinstating this program will reduce obesity rates and ultimately reduce death and disability from cardiovascular disease. This Fund also has the potential to significantly improve the state's economy as the past iteration yielded in 20 new food markets across New York, with 441 permanent FTE jobs and 622 construction jobs collectively. Additionally, the AHA urges NYS to address the unique needs of corner store owners who wish to provide healthy food options in their establishments but lack refrigeration and storage to do so. The Healthy Corner Store Initiative will provide funding for businesses seeking to retrofit their physical plant to accommodate fresh food, thereby increasing healthy food options at existing corner stores in underserved communities.

Tobacco Control Program: 52M Funding Recommendation – Increase in Funding

The AHA urges the legislature to increase funding for the Tobacco Control Program (TCP) to 52M, a 12.7M increase from the 39.3M proposed in the SFY 2016-17 Executive Budget, but well below the CDC-recommended funding level². The statistics on the adverse health impact of tobacco use remain staggering: over 28,000 New Yorkers a year die from tobacco-caused illnesses and over 10,600 New York kids will become smokers this year³. The cost to the state of tobacco use also remains high, with 6.6 billion Medicaid spending attributable to tobacco related healthcare costs⁴. The statistics make a compelling case to, at minimum, bring the TCP funding up to 52M in SFY 2016-17 so that more programs and services can be provided to New Yorkers most at risk for initiating tobacco use and those trying to quit.

Implementation of CPR in Schools Requirement: 2M Funding Recommendation – NEW

In September 2015, the New York State Board of Regents approved the *NY State Education Department Commissioner's Regulations to Require Instruction in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and the Use of Automated External Defibrillators*. This action capped over 15 years of tireless advocacy by dedicated American Heart Association volunteers to have this life saving skill taught in New York State schools. Advances in clinical medicine have proven that hands-only CPR, which can be taught in approximately half an hour, provides a significant benefit to a patient experiencing an emergency cardiac event. Those precious minutes prior to the arrival of emergency medical response are critical to saving a life. To that end, the AHA requests that NYS fund a grant program to assist in the implementation of the CPR in Schools requirement. To be clear, it is possible for schools to comply with the requirement to teach

² http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best_practices/pdfs/2014/comprehensive.pdf

³ The Toll of Tobacco in New York State; Center for Tobacco-Free Kids; Updated September 25, 2015.

http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/new_york

⁴ Ibid

CPR in schools without any additional resources. The AHA believes that a relatively small amount of funding will assist schools in coordinating a robust training program by providing funds to purchase equipment that can be utilized for several years. The payoff of this investment by the state is immediate and clear – it will save lives.

In closing, the attached overview details additional funding requests for the Healthy Heart/Hypertension program and the Obesity/Diabetes Prevention program both of which are also key elements in reducing the death and disability that result from heart disease and stroke. The American Heart Association strongly encourages the Assembly and Senate to increase the funding proposed in the SFY 2016-17 Executive Budget to the levels detailed in this memo – the results will save lives.

Please contact either of us with questions or for additional information.

Respectfully Submitted,
Martha Auster
Director of Government Relations
American Heart Association
martha.auster@heart.org
518-384-4735

Kristin Salvi
Director of Government Relations
American Heart Association
kristin.salvi@heart.org
518-331-1881

