



Harwich Fire Department



Fire Suppression

Prevention

Emergency Services

David J. LeBlanc, **Chief of Department**

Craig W. Thornton, **Deputy Fire Chief**

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Members of the Committee.

The members of the Harwich Fire Department, my Deputy Chief and I wish to express our wholehearted support for the Harwich Recreation Department's request for CPC funding in their effort to acquire AEDs for use in their beach operation and recreation programs.

Despite great strides made over the years in the identification, prevention and care of heart disease sudden onset cardiac arrest remains one of the countries leading causes of death. It may strike without warning at any time, in any place. The Harwich Fire Department always stands ready to respond, but in these cases every minute is crucial. The chances of successful resuscitation and preservation of life decrease with every minute that passes without care being initiated. While the recreation staff is well trained in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, prompt defibrillation is an indispensable part of the process. Irreversible brain damage may begin to set in in as little as four minutes after the onset of a cardiac arrest and evidence has shown a notable decrease in survival rates after that point. On-site AEDs in the hands of trained responders fill the gap between a critical incident and our arrival on scene. The benefits of their presence in the community and their potential to positively affect the outcome of an otherwise tragic event cannot be overstated.

The presence of AEDs has become standard over the years in busy locations, large gatherings and areas where high intensity activities take place. The Harwich beaches and the recreation programs certainly fit those descriptions. The citizens of Harwich and our visitors will be well served, and can rest easier, if they know that these lifesaving machines will be placed in the community, in the hands of trained responders, ready to save lives.

I wholeheartedly endorse the recreation departments request and urge you to look favorably upon it. We will all be better off if it meets with your approval.

David J. LeBlanc
Chief of Department