

# Healthy Heart, Healthy Utah: Supporting Public Health Where It Matters Most

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# National PTA Position Statement

- Entitled “The Health of Children and Youth and Family Access to Care”
  - “Every child deserves the opportunity to grow into a happy and healthy adult, which includes mental, physical and overall well-being.”

# Goals

- Share legislative “wins” that improve the life of Utah’s children and youth
  - American Heart Association supported legislation regarding cardiac emergencies in school
- Discuss other measures Utah PTA has support in our schools and communities



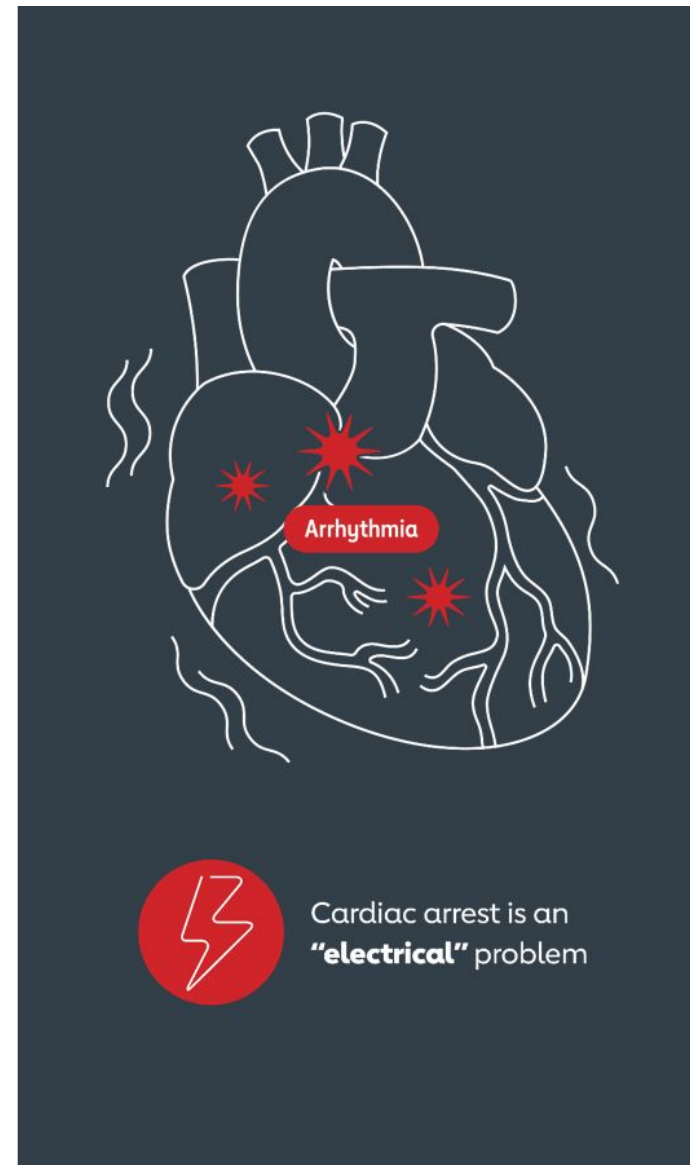
# CARDIAC EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS **IN SCHOOLS**

Empowering a Nation of Lifesavers™



# What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

- ▶ Sudden cardiac arrest occurs when the heart malfunctions and stops beating unexpectedly.
- ▶ An electrical malfunction in the heart causes an arrhythmia, or irregular heartbeat.
- ▶ In seconds, a person becomes unresponsive and cannot breathe.
- ▶ Death occurs within minutes if the person does not receive treatment.



# Cardiac Arrest Is a Leading Cause of Death

Cardiac arrest can happen anywhere, to anyone, at any age.



**356,000+**

**CARDIAC ARRESTS**  
occur outside of a hospital  
annually in the U.S.



**AMONG CHILDREN**

**23,000**

experience cardiac arrest  
outside of a hospital



**40%**

**OF PEOPLE**  
get the immediate help  
that they need

# Cardiac Arrest in Utah

- ▶ In Utah, around 2,000 cardiac arrests occur outside of a hospital each year.
- ▶ In 2024, there were 25 Sudden Cardiac Arrests in children ages 1-12 in Utah outside of a hospital. Of these, zero survived to hospital discharge.
- ▶ In 2024, there were 24 Sudden Cardiac Arrests in children ages 13 – 18 in Utah outside of a hospital. Of these, only five survived to be discharged from the hospital.

# That's Where CERPs Come In

- ▶ What is a CERP?  
It's a written document that establishes specific steps to reduce death from cardiac arrest in school settings and ensures that school responders are trained on how to execute them.
- ▶ A CERP can be stand-alone guidelines or merged with a school's existing medical emergency response plans.



# CERPs Save Lives!

- ▶ CERPs more than **DOUBLE survival rates from cardiac arrest** by empowering people to take action and dial 911, start CPR, and use an AED.
- ▶ We need CERPs in **every school and athletic event/facility**.
- ▶ CERPs should also be integrated into a community's local EMS responder protocols.



# Did You Know?

Cardiac arrest can be reversed if lifesaving care is administered within a few minutes.

- ▶ CPR, if performed immediately, can **DOUBLE OR TRIPLE** a person's chance of survival.
- ▶ In schools with AEDs, approximately **70% OF CHILDREN** survive cardiac arrest – that's **7X** the overall survival rate for children.

# Why Schools?

- ▶ Schools are a nucleus for community events. Parents and community members are often at schools for plays, concerts, or athletic events.
- ▶ Shared use agreements also allow communities to regularly access schools to vote, exercise, host group meetings, and more.

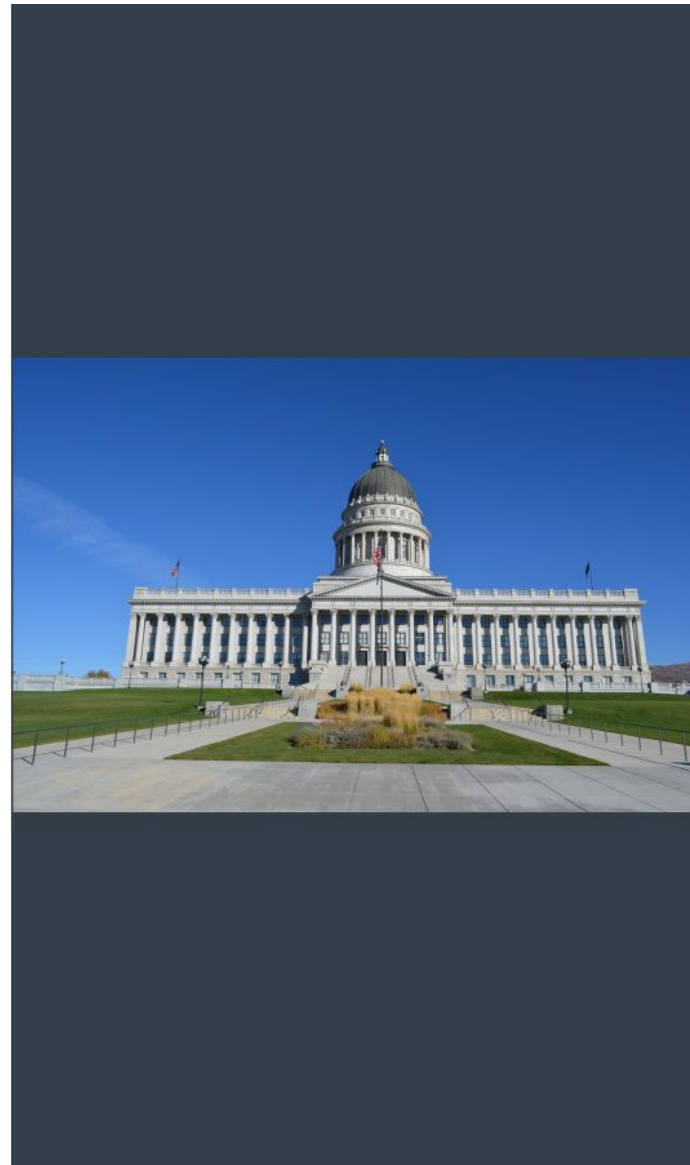


**49.5 Million**  
students are  
enrolled in U.S.  
public schools

**3 Million**  
teachers are  
in the public  
school system

# What does SB 244, Cardiac Emergency Response Plans in Schools, Accomplish?

- ▶ Requires cardiac emergency response plans in all Utah public and charter schools.
- ▶ Ensures Utah schools have the appropriate number of maintained AEDs
- ▶ Ensures a team of responders within each school are trained in emergency response including CPR and AED use.
- ▶ Outlines what cardiac emergency response plans should include—such as policies, procedures, and training—based on nationally recognized guidelines.
- ▶ Funds \$200,000 to support the implementation of these plans in schools



# What does a CERP Entail?

- ▶ Developing a Cardiac Response Team (CERT)
- ▶ AED Placement, Installation and Maintenance
- ▶ Communication of Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP) protocol
- ▶ Training in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Use.
- ▶ Local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Integration with the School Plan
- ▶ Conduct Practice Drills
- ▶ Activation of CERT During an Identified Cardiac Emergency
- ▶ Annual Review and Evaluation of the Plan

# Case Study in Utah

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Maria Montessori  
Academy



# HB 100 Food Security Amendments (2025)

- Provided 2.5 million dollars in ongoing funding to reduce food insecurity in student in Utah schools (K-12)
  - Provides free lunch to students who qualify for reduced-priced lunch
  - Eliminate stigma for student with food debt owed to the school
  - Created a share table for items not consumed by students

# Why is Food Insecurity an Issue?

- 1 in 5 children in Utah face food insecurity
  - Rising housing costs, grocery/food costs, and economic pressures
- Utah Food Bank reports that 1 in 7 Utahns are hungry
- Current demands for assistance is at an all time high
- Food insecurity disproportionately affects children and other vulnerable populations

# HB 351 School Vision Screening Amendments (2026)

- Utah PTA supported the bill
- Requires LEAs to follow up with a parents after a student fails their initial vision screening
  - Ensures the family is aware of the issues
  - Opportunity to provide information on resources

# Why is Vision Screening So Important?

- 1 in 4 children may have visual issues affecting learning and behavior
  - Behavioral issues may be mislabeled as ADHD
- Center vision problems that are not corrected before age 7 or 8 may result in permanent vision loss and conditions like lazy eye can become irreversible
- Identifys children who may need corrective measure for nearsightedness, farsightedness, and/or astigmatism

# HB 152 Educational Vaccine Exemption Amendments (2026)

- Utah PTA Opposed
- Aim: Repeals provisions requiring a parent to complete an online education module or in-person consultation to receive a vaccination exemption form
- About 12% of Kindergartners have an exemption (in-person, homeschooled, and online learners)
  - Rates continue to rise!
- Bill failed to pass

# Why do we care about immunizations?

- Increasing number of Utah's children are not being vaccinated
  - 2024-2025 Immunization rates for Kindergarten was 86.9% - 88.6%
  - Need a rate of 95% for herd immunity
- December 2025
  - Measles case in the childcare center at Bingham High School in an unimmunized individual with unknown exposure
- Current outbreak in Utah: Over 600 cases reported by mid-April 2026

# Measles

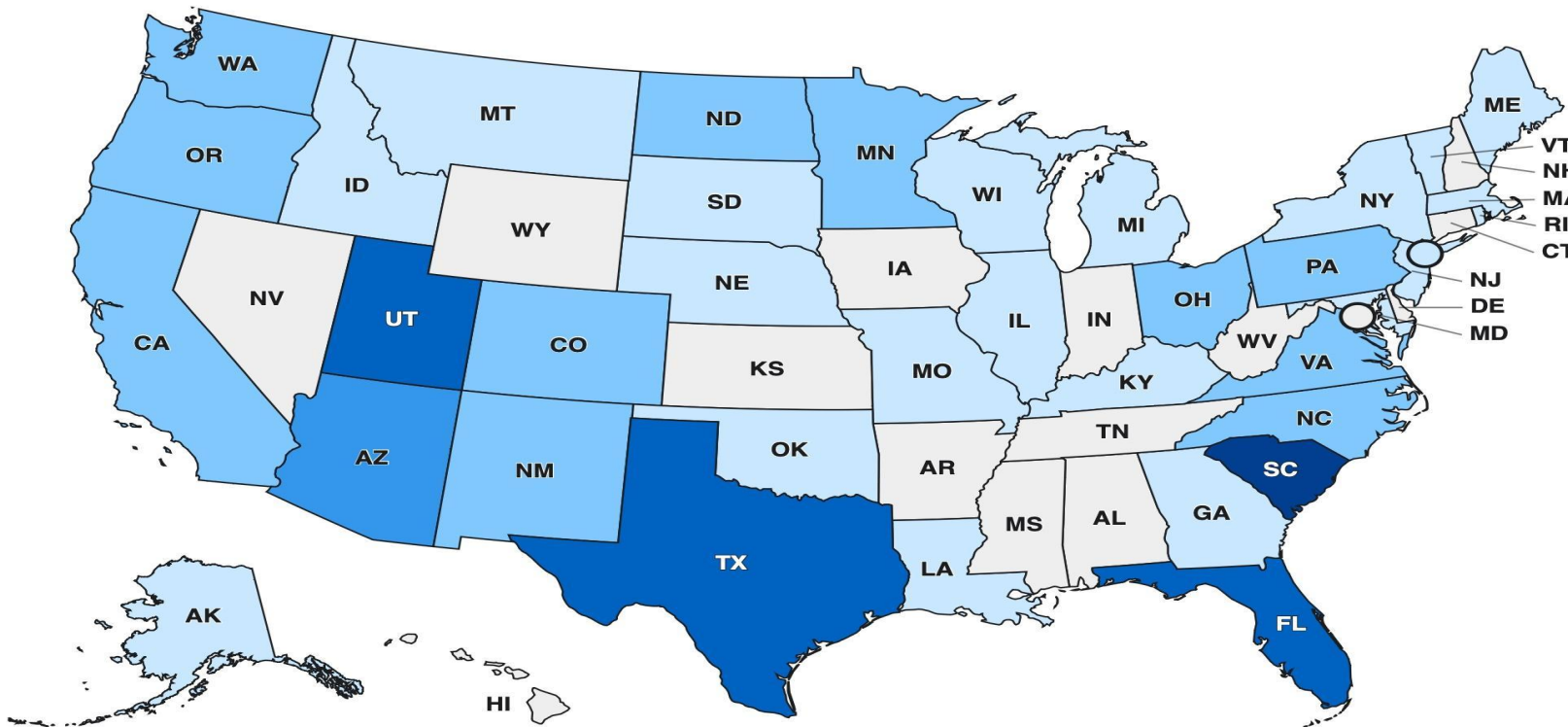
- In children, 1 in 5 who develop measles require hospitalization
  - Pneumonia
    - Most common cause of death in young children (1 in 20 cases)
  - Encephalitis
    - Occurance 1 in 1000 cases
    - Permanent brain damage, Seizures, or Deafness
  - Long term
    - Measles destroys immune cells making children vulnerable to other infections
  - Rare, fatal complication
    - Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis can develop years after the measles infection (ages 7-8 years old) in children who contracted the infection before the age of 2



# Map of measles cases among U.S. residents

as of April 23, 2026

2026 2025 2024



April 26, 2026

South Carolina: 668 cases  
Utah: 425 cases  
Texas: 180 cases  
Arizona: 77 cases

# Tooth Decay Screening

- Contacted in 2024 by the Oral Health Division at the Utah Department of Health and Human Services requesting support
  - 45 identified schools in Utah where 3<sup>rd</sup> graders would have their tooth decay visualized
  - Results to drive public policy in the state
  - Difficulty getting consent from parents

# Sent an Email to Region Directors

Parents and their children at the schools listed below have an opportunity to assist in making public policy for pediatric dental care in Utah. The schools listed have been selected to have students within their schools screened. This is done by taking pictures of the mouth of the child. No information will be sent home to parents regarding the outcome of the photos or any identified dental issues. Identifying information will not be shared with the Department of Health and Human Services. This is how public health studies and information are handled. It is a way to assess the health of children's mouths to help direct policy for the health of all children in Utah. The health department is having a difficult time getting students enrolled. This is not like vision and hearing screening where the information obtained is used to benefit the child directly. We hope that parents can be informed within their schools and questions answered to help assist with the recruitment process.

Please take a minute to determine if a school in your region is on the list. If it is, can you send me the email of the PTA president at the school? Thank you for your efforts!!



# Utah PTA Newsletter



## Oral Health Survey in Utah Elementary Schools

Forty-five schools within Utah have been selected by the state epidemiology team to participate in the Basic Screening Survey (BSS). The BSS will help to determine the overall dental health and tooth decay among elementary children in Utah. The state health department is having a difficult time obtaining consent from families to participate in the program in the identified schools. If your school has been invited to participate, please help spread awareness as this survey will ultimately impact all Utah children as the data will be used to determine oral health policy.

If you have any questions about the program, please reach out to Lauren Neufeld at [lneufeld@utah.gov](mailto:lneufeld@utah.gov).



# Oral Health Status of Utah's Children

2024-2025

March 2026

Received a thank you for the support of PTA volunteers, including at the screenings, and a copy of the report detailing the results of the study

# Important Findings

- 2 out of 3 of the 3rd graders screened currently have or have had a cavity.
- 3% of children screened had an urgent dental need due to pain or infection.
- Dental sealants are a safe and low-cost way to prevent cavities; however, only 36% of Utah 3rd graders screened have received a dental sealant.
- Children who receive free or reduced-price lunch were 4 times more likely to have not received needed dental care in the past year.
- The most common reasons for not receiving needed care were being unable to afford the cost (68%) and not having insurance (63%).

# Takeaway

- Advocacy work can have a profound impact on the health and well-being of the children in our state
- From supporting valued legislation to taking a stance on concerning legislation, we can help to shape public policy
- PTA volunteer have an impact on their communities that reach far beyond their school

Thank You!

# Contact Information

- Dr. Kelly Adams - [Kelly@utahpta.org](mailto:Kelly@utahpta.org)
  - Questions
  - Interest in being involved with the Utah PTA Health Commission

# Connect with us on social media



FACEBOOK

- Utah PTA
- Utah PTA Advocacy
- Utah PTA Super Secondary
- Utah PTA Excellent Elementary
- Utah PTA Treasurers
- Utah PTA Reflections
- Utah School Community Councils
- Utah PTA Teachers
- Utah PTA Battle of the Bands

# Connect with us on social media

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X - @UtahPTAOneVoice



PINTEREST - Utah PTA



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# UTAH PTA SPONSORS

