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July 3, 2019

Sent via email

The Honorable Alcee Hastings
2353 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brad Wenstrup
2419 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Prevent Blood Loss with Emergency Equipment Devices Act of 2019

Dear Congressman Hastings and Congressman Wenstrup,

On behalf of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), I am pleased to write in support of H.R. 2550, the Prevent Blood Loss with Emergency Equipment Devices Act of 2019. This legislation would provide grant funding to states for bleeding control kits and training which will help citizens to take lifesaving action when the need arises.

Founded in 1964, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,600 surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals worldwide who are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for surgeries of the heart, lungs, and esophagus, as well as other surgical procedures within the chest. The mission of the Society is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research, and advocacy.

Annually, more than 160,000 people die from unintended injuries.¹ Many of these deaths result from severe hemorrhaging in the minutes following an accident and before first responders arrive at the scene. The bill amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 which makes grants available to state, local and tribal governments for local domestic preparedness. Using these grants, state, local, and tribal governments may acquire anti-blood loss supplies, which include tourniquets, gauze, wound-packing material, hemostatic dressings, gloves, markers and other materials. These materials will be kept in places where large numbers of people are likely to congregate and, like automated external defibrillators, will be clearly marked and accessible. The grant also allows governments to train citizens on how to use the materials properly. The American College of Surgeons, along with The Committee on Trauma, and the Hartford Consensus, have developed a training program and resources available at bleedingcontrol.org for this purpose. Empowering trained citizens to step in to control bleeding until medical professionals arrive will save lives during emergency situations.

Cardiothoracic surgeons frequently treat trauma victims. Unfortunately, by the time these patients reach the hospital, many of them cannot be saved. We hope that this legislation will give victims a better chance of survival in the field so that they can make it to the hospital and receive the care they need. Thank you commend you for your leadership on this important issue. Please contact Courtney Yohe Savage, STS Director of Government Relations, at cyohe@sts.org or 202-787-1230 should you need additional information or clarification. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Robert S.D. Higgins, MD
President

¹ FastStats - Deaths and Mortality. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/deaths.htm>