

## New York City Council passes defibrillator law

By TIMOTHY WILLIAMS  
Associated Press Writer

February 16, 2005, 5:31 PM EST

NEW YORK -- The City Council unanimously approved a plan to place defibrillators in thousands of locations throughout the city, including health clubs, courthouses and public parks.



The bill, which is supported by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, passed 47-0 on Wednesday.

City Councilman James Oddo, who introduced the bill last year, said he had worked on the issue for seven years and had "poured a great deal of blood, sweat and tears into insuring that this day comes."

"I have heard the tragic stories of people dying across the country where their lives could have been saved if there had been a defibrillator present," said Oddo, a Republican who represents Staten Island.

Automated external defibrillators are capable of recognizing the presence or absence of ventricular fibrillation, the most common arrhythmia that causes cardiac arrest. Essentially, the condition causes the heart to stop pumping blood effectively.

The device can determine whether defibrillation is necessary and can deliver electrical impulses to a victim's heart. It is connected to a victim's chest via adhesive electrodes and will not shock anyone who does not need defibrillation because it first monitors the rhythm of the heart.

People are taught how to use the device by listening to voice instructions.

The legislation's supporters say it could save many lives, especially given that the likelihood of surviving sudden cardiac arrest in New York City outside a hospital is only about 1 percent.

The American Red Cross has estimated that as many as 50,000 deaths could be prevented in the United States each year if defibrillators were deployed widely in public places.

A related state law passed recently requires defibrillators in all state buildings and in health clubs with more than 500 members.

The city legislation, which would take effect June 16, requires defibrillators in gyms with more than 250 members, in senior centers, in stadiums, on golf courses, in nursing homes, in courthouses, in parks, in ferry terminals and in city buildings, including City Hall. Under state law, automated external defibrillators already are required in city schools.

An automated external defibrillator costs up to \$3,000.

The city will have to pay about \$1 million to place the devices on its properties. Private businesses will have to buy their own.

*Copyright © 2005, The Associated Press*