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State Representative Shawn Dooley Files Massachusetts Trauma Response Preparedness Act

BOSTON – State Representative Shawn Dooley (R-Norfolk) is proud to announce the filing of his bill *HD4327 An Act relative to requiring trauma kits in public buildings*, or what he dubs The Massachusetts Trauma Response Preparedness Act, with the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Dooley’s bill aims to address the recent growth of Mass Casualty Incidents (MCIs) throughout the nation by requiring all public buildings in Massachusetts, including public and private schools; libraries; transportation facilities; recreational facilities; entertainment and sporting venues; and buildings of government, to house a basic bleeding control kit and a person trained to use it. The bill has garnered support from a group of bipartisan co-sponsors in the Massachusetts House and Senate as well as from the American College of Surgeons and the Stop the Bleeding Coalition (SBC), a national grassroots group of medical professionals; law enforcement officers; former military personnel; tactical first responders; educators; and concerned citizens dedicated to increasing readiness for MCIs.

According to statistics provided by the SBC, since the Columbine High School shooting in 1999 through 2015, there were 91 MCIs nationwide, resulting in 3,487 fatalities and over 7,000 injuries. This does not include the ballooning of these types of events over the last two years. Though MCIs can vary in the location they take place; the motivation for carrying them out; and the method used for killing, the one common thread seen amongst all of them is the main cause of fatalities: Uncontrolled hemorrhage from an extremity. In fact, the SBC estimates that over 80% of all civilian trauma fatalities are caused by this. Worse yet, it is estimated that each year over 1,000 savable lives are lost due to inefficiencies in our emergency response systems.

The provisions of Dooley’s bill directly speak to these glaring issues. The bill would require all public buildings in Massachusetts, including schools; libraries; transportation facilities; recreational facilities; entertainment and sporting venues; and government buildings; to house at least one centrally located bleeding control kit and someone trained to use it. Bleeding control kits, otherwise known as trauma kits, are basic, inexpensive, and readily accessible hemorrhage control kits containing easy-to-use tools such as a tourniquet, gauze, and gloves to allow anyone to help stem serious bleeds before the arrival of first responders. Other provisions of the bill would require schools to report on the availability of bleeding control kits in their mandated emergency

response plans and also allow buildings housing an AED to share the same storage space and trained staff member for both the bleeding control kit and the AED.

“As a firefighter and an EMT I know the stakes are high on this issue” said Dooley. “We have done a lot in the Commonwealth to attempt to address the increase in MCIs and we are way ahead of the curve in terms of preparedness, but we have missed this important piece. I know a bleeding control kit could never prevent a tragedy from occurring, but it’s just one piece of the puzzle of how to prevent more lives from being lost.”

In a letter to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, Dr. Matt Levy, Chairman of the Stop the Bleeding Coalition, praised Dooley’s proposed legislation which he calls “a progressive and timely bill.” In the letter he writes, “As both everyday trauma, as well as intentional mass casualty events, continue to occur, we must take steps to help make the public safer and increase their likelihood for survival following such incidents. This includes training and access to hemorrhage control resources. We thank you for your leadership in this initiative.” Levy also added that he plans to distribute language of Dooley’s bill to his members as a template to use in other states.

The American College of Surgeons has also weighed in on the Act, writing “We consider this legislation as a major component to ensuring that lifesaving tools and resources are available to the public during mass casualty events. . . . Similar to Automated Electronic Defibrillators (AEDs), trauma kits are a simple and effective way to help save lives of victims suffering severe bleeding injuries as a result of a traumatic event, by stopping life-threatening bleeding while awaiting the arrival of professional emergency responders.”

Additionally, Millis resident Lisa Ferzoco, both a constituent of Dooley’s and a trauma surgeon at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and New England Baptist Hospital, has been a driving force behind the bill. “Our goal is zero preventable deaths due to uncontrolled bleeding” said Ferzoco. “We have learned lessons from military experiences as well as recent Mass Casualty events in the community, in particular Sandy Hook and the Boston Marathon Bombing, that hemorrhage control saves lives. We have also learned that in situations of mass casualty that first responders such as EMS are often unable to reach victims quickly enough to apply live saving bleeding control techniques. Along with educating the public, Representative Dooley’s bill is a crucial first step toward our goal of giving the public the means to recognize and the tools to provide immediate life-saving treatment for massive hemorrhage.”

Dooley says the next step is to get the bill and into a hearing. “We are forming a wide coalition of supporters to help demonstrate to the leaders on Beacon Hill that bleeding control not only matters but should be a legislative priority this session. Nothing ever comes easy up there; but this is too important, and I won’t stop fighting for it.”

In that spirit, Dooley, along with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, has organized to bring the American College of Surgeons’ nationally recognized, revolutionary, and life-saving Stop the Bleed Course to the Massachusetts State House on June 4th to train legislators and their staffs on the basics of bleeding control. “My hope is that by actively engaging my colleagues in this educational and informational training, we will be able to illustrate just how simple, easy, and common sense this initiative really is” said Dooley.

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