



CITY COUNCILLOR

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Toronto City Hall
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Re: Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Access in High-Rise Buildings

September 19th, 2025

Dear Chair & Committee Members,

I am writing to request your support to have Staff review opportunities to expand access to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in Toronto's residential buildings, with particular attention to high-rise developments and buildings with significant senior populations. Toronto is experiencing unprecedented densification. As we grow upward, we must ensure that this density does not compromise the health and safety of our residents.

Current research demonstrates a troubling gap in emergency cardiac care access for residents of tall buildings, particularly seniors who face elevated risk of cardiac events. A 2016 study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal found that cardiac arrests occurring above the third floor of high-rise buildings have significantly lower survival rates (2.6%) compared to those below the third floor (4.2%). Meanwhile, Toronto uses AEDs in only 3% of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests, far lower than peer cities like Seattle where both AED deployment and survival rates are higher.

This gap in emergency preparedness is particularly concerning given Toronto's aging population. As we continue to build tall residential developments, we have an opportunity to ensure these buildings include basic life-saving equipment. The City has multiple potential avenues to address this issue, including regulatory measures, fiscal incentives to support AED installation, and advocacy to the Provincial Government for Building Code amendments. The motion below directs staff to undertake a comprehensive review of options to expand AED access in Toronto's residential buildings, with a focus on practical implementation pathways.

RECOMMENDATIONS:



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1. Planning and Housing Committee request the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards and the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, in consultation with the Medical Officer of Health, to report back by the third quarter 2026 on opportunities to expand the presence of Automated External Defibrillators in private buildings in Toronto, including the feasibility of voluntary and regulatory measures.

As Toronto continues to grow upward and age, ensuring access to basic emergency medical equipment in our high-rise buildings is a matter of life and death. I urge your support for this important review.

Sincerely,

Councillor Shelley Carroll

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