

New Colorado law encourages distribution of public access defibrillators

Vail Valley nonprofit Starting Hearts' advocacy efforts help achieve important legislation

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VD Staff Report



From left, Rep. Dylan Roberts, Alan Himelfarb, Lynn Blake and Gov. Jared Polis pose for a picture outside Blue Moose Pizza in Lionshead at a bill signing ceremony. *Special to the Daily*

On May 22, Governor Jared Polis [signed House Bill 19-1183 into law](#). The bill encourages public and private organizations to accept donations of public access defibrillators and opens the door to greatly increase adoption of these lifesaving devices in communities throughout Colorado.

In addition, the bill includes seed money to establish a grant program within the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to encourage financial donations for the purchase of defibrillators.

The bill was championed by Colorado Rep. Dylan Roberts of House District 26, which encompasses Eagle and Routt counties. His

counterpart in the Colorado Senate, Sen. Jeff Bridges, advanced the bill in the Senate chamber.

Starting Hearts, an Eagle County nonprofit dedicated to saving the lives of sudden cardiac arrest victims, played an active role in the pursuit of this important legislation. Lynn Blake, founder and cardiac arrest survivor, testified in support of the bill before the House Health & Insurance Committee on March 6.

Thereafter, Alan Himelfarb, Starting Hearts' Executive Director, testified in support of the bill before the [Senate Health and Human Services](#) on April 10. In a recent Facebook post, Rep. Roberts said, "Thank you to Eagle County's Starting Hearts for helping to make this happen."

"We are so thankful to Rep. Roberts, Sen. Bridges, and Gov. Polis for this important legislation," Blake said in a news release. "A defibrillator saved my life, and placing more of these in public locations will save many precious lives. We are so pleased to have been part of the process and excited for what the future holds."

"While lifesaving defibrillators are becoming more mainstream, larger organizations often remain reluctant to make placements," Himelfarb said. "With generous donations in-hand from private donors, institutions, and grantmakers, we still face obstacles for highly trafficked public locations, such as supermarkets and big box stores. This legislation will greatly enhance our ability to place devices in locations such as these."