

To All this May Concern:

This is written in regard to a Fort Worth Star Telegram story re. Flight Aid. There are several items I would like the FAA to take into consideration for the proposed regulation of AED's and additional medical equipment onto commercial airlines. These include: proper certification for use of equipment, maintenance of equipment, regulation of drug administration, and further responsibilities.

The use of AED's in airliners was a "shock" when they were first installed. Technology has advanced so much in the last few decades and now we are faced with moral challenges. The use of AED's and additional life saving devices on airliners is not a black or white decision. Of course, we must consider all of the circumstances behind their use.

I am a Registered Nurse and work in an intensive care unit. I am required to carry current Basic Life Support and Advanced Cardiac Life Support certifications. Upon acquiring these certifications, I learned that Airway comes first... the old ABC's. Thus, when I heard of the AED use in airliners, I questioned how effective they would be. You can get a heart to start beating again, but don't know how to support the airway and further actions to actually save the person?! Time is the key factor in resuscitation because significant loss of oxygen to the brain and organs can cause irreversible damages.

The next question, how much training are the flight attendants going to be required if you do pass this into legislation? I went to school for 4 years to maintain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. That covers assessments, medication administration during interventions, and much, much more. Nursing is a career that is not to be taken lightly. Even Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics require long hours of training to correctly identify acute situations and act immediately. We are certified and work hard to get there. Now, will this become some mockery of life saving attempts in the hands of untrained people? Are these flight attendants prepared to have the responsibility of their patrons'/patients' lives in their hands at all times? If so, how much education are they going to get?!

What about the maintenance of the equipment and drugs for this new proposal? The equipment must be checked on a routine basis and repaired at intervals such as the planes have to be maintained every so many hours. The drugs on the proposal... what drugs exactly are we talking about? The Star Telegram article mentioned atropine, lidocaine, IV start kits, oxygen, benadryl, nitro., etc.. All of these are drugs, and important ones at that. All of these can be beneficial or detrimental when used. Are the flight attendants going to be given the same liberty as hard working, degreed, experienced, nurses to administer such drugs? The above listed drugs are prescriptive and require assessment upon use. Who will make sure the right drug is given at the right time, to the right person, in the right dose, by the right route? How will the drugs on board be monitored for expirations and other complications related to drug storage?

This is not intended to be negative. These questions need to have answers to before proceeding. I am a skilled professional and have the community and it's health in a holistic focus. Lives need to be saved when possible at every attempt. Yet we must ask ourselves how far do you want to take this? The airlines began with nurse attendants, maybe this is what the airline industry needs now if such requirements are to be made upon them.

Thank you for your time and consideration into this matter.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Cruickshank, RN, BSN