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PLDW, Governor Raimondo and the American Red Cross to Hold a Press Conference on the State's First Law Requiring AED Life-Saving Devices in All Schools

Owen West, age 16 and a Survivor of Sudden Cardiac Arrest, Speaks Out to Raise Awareness

Providence, RI – November 18, 2016 – Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West LLC will hold a press conference with Governor Gina M. Raimondo and the American Red Cross on Monday, November 21, 2016, at 10 a.m. at PLDW's Providence office at 317 Iron Horse Way, Suite 301, to raise awareness of Rhode Island's first law that requires all public and private schools to have an automated external defibrillator (AED) on school grounds at all times. The significance of this legislation, which became effective August 1, 2016, will be exemplified by the near death experience of now 16-year-old Owen West, son of PLDW Principal Teno A. West, who on September 17, 2014, suffered a cardiac arrest at his high school and survived only because of the immediate availability of an AED and American Red Cross trained CPR staff. Additionally, the Governor will use this occasion to recognize the American Red Cross in its centennial year of service and its advocacy and support of the legislation. Tempie Thompson, Executive Director of the American Red Cross, Rhode Island, will also present remarks.

Governor Raimondo, a champion of the legislation, signed the bill ([H-7275](#); [S-2494](#)), which was sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggerio (District 4) and Representative Jan Malik (District 67) during the 2016 General Assembly. The law makes it mandatory that AEDs are in all schools in Rhode Island, as well as available at school athletic events.

The event will recognize the 100 years of service by the American Red Cross and its CPR training programs, and highlight the dire importance of AEDs in schools. Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is the leading cause of death in the U.S., taking the lives of 600,000 annually, according to the Institute of Medicine. This silent killer is the #1 killer of student athletes and the #2 medical cause of death among youth under 25. Unlike a heart attack, SCA is the sudden onset of an abnormal and potentially fatal heart rhythm that causes the heart to beat ineffectively or not at all. Up to 95% of SCA victims die because there was a delay in emergency response, according to Parent Heart Watch, who added: "The first symptom of SCA is often death, either because the warning signs of an underlying heart condition were not recognized or help was not administered within minutes of the event." Owen, who has turned his life threatening experience into a public cause to speak out as a Red Cross Ambassador about the need for the life-saving device to be at schools and public facilities, hopes his story will help raise awareness and help save other students' lives.

"As a father, I will be forever grateful to the wonderful people who saved my son's life. There is no doubt that access to the AED by the school staff and their CPR training by the American Red Cross brought Owen back to life," said Mr. West. "I never want another parent to experience what our family went through. We thank the Governor and the House and Senate sponsors of the bill and the American Red Cross for the tremendous work the organization does to help save lives and for the support it has given to Owen and our family."

"My number one job as Governor is keeping people safe – and this legislation is just one of many important steps we can take to protect the health and well-being of our students," said Governor Raimondo. "I applaud the sponsors – Leader Ruggerio in the Senate and Chairman Malik in the House – for moving this legislation forward, and I'm very proud of Owen and the American Red Cross for their work to raise awareness about how we can help save lives."

"The Red Cross is honored to participate in this important event to highlight the importance of AED's and CPR training in our schools and communities," said Ms. Thompson of the local chapter. "For 100 years, the Rhode Island Red Cross has been helping to save lives through our programs like CPR and AED training, and we will continue to help save lives for the next 100 years and beyond."

Media is invited to attend this event, hear Owen's story first-hand, and help raise awareness about the vital importance of the law and to share information with the public about SCA and how families and communities can help prevent this silent killer by ensuring an AED is in their schools and that CPR training is available through the American Red Cross.

Contact Clare Eckert at PLDW to schedule an interview with Owen at 401-855-2601 or email ceckert@pldw.com. For information about the American Red Cross, please contact Stefanie Arcangelo, Director of Communications, at 860-308-4271 or stefanie.arcangelo@redcross.org. To reach the Governor's Press Office, please contact Marie Aberger at 401-222-8124.

About Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West LLC

The attorneys and staff at Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West LLC (PLDW) are committed to delivering cost-effective solutions for their clients as well as supporting the community in a meaningful way. Many of the lawyers at PLDW were formerly members of international law firms and are trained in multiple disciplines including the areas of corporate and business law, special masterships, government relations and legislative strategies, municipal infrastructure, civil litigation, real estate development and commercial lending, nonprofit law, health care, white collar defense, estate planning, probate and trust litigation. The core values of integrity, quality services and responsiveness are stressed each day at PLDW. For more information, visit www.pldw.com.