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March 13, 2025

Testimony of Representative Anne-Marie Mastraccio presenting
**LD 808, An Act to Require Schools Boards and Governing Bodies of
Approved Private Schools to Implement Wearable Panic Alert
Systems**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and esteemed colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. I am Anne-Marie Mastraccio, and I represent House District 142, which includes part of the City of Sanford and the Village of Springvale. I am before you today to present **LD 808, An Act to Require School Boards and Governing Bodies of Approved Private Schools to Implement Wearable Panic Alert Systems**.

In a crisis, every second matters. On November 15, 2022, more than 10 Maine schools from Sanford to Fort Fairfield were victims of an active shooter hoax. The Sanford Police Strategic Response Team responded to our high school within minutes, but it took hours to fully verify that it was a hoax while they systematically cleared rooms, one by one, moving students out of the building to a safe area.

The confusion was generated by the hundreds, if not thousands, of text messages sent out by frightened students and staff, from every corner of the building. The subsequent trauma inflicted on them might have been alleviated by the use of a wearable silent panic alert system. The goal of this type of alert system is to increase coordination, reduce response times and, when a medical emergency or an active shooter type of event is happening, get emergency services quicker to the assailant, quicker to the incident and cut time off the clock to save lives.

A wearable panic button badge is a critical upgrade to traditional school panic buttons. By wearing the panic button on their person, school staff can activate it quickly and discreetly, without the risk of drawing unwanted attention. The wearable design ensures that the panic button is always within reach, reducing response times and improving the chances of a positive outcome in an emergency situation.

Moreover, wearable panic button badges can be integrated with other emergency response technologies to create a comprehensive safety solution. Customized alert systems can be used to notify law enforcement, emergency responders and school administrators directly from the

badge. Wearable panic buttons can also provide real-time updates and tracking information even when the wearer is on the move.

We have spent so much time and money hardening the security of our schools with locks, bullet proof glass, active shooter trainings and metal detectors, but I believe we can and should do more to ensure students and staff feel safe. Incorporating a wearable panic alert system would help create a culture of preparedness, reassuring parents and community members that their school is equipped to handle emergencies effectively.

Thank you for your consideration, and I urge your support for LD 808.

This letter is in regards to the implementation of wearable panic alert systems that is being presented today.

My name is Joseph Jourdain and I am a police officer in Sanford Maine, currently in my 17th year. I can offer multiple perspectives through different lenses on this topic. A quick bio on my background can offer my views and experiences.

I have been on a Special Response Team for approximately 13 years and I am a School Resource Officer, currently in my fifth year. Through training and experience, I will offer my views and opinions on this topic.

As a patrol officer and trainer, I help train officers on responding to critical incidents and active shooter incidents. This training teaches response and tactics. Once we get in the building, what is our driving force? Officers are trained on pushing to a threat, following a stimulus. When there is no stimulus to follow, things slow down, which could be critical as a search becomes slower and more methodical.

As a School Resource Officer, I know information and technology will and can fail. The internet will go down and can be overridden, information may not be relayed properly, and the wrong information can be pushed out, due to human error which would result from being under duress. I have witnessed this type of fail first hand in drills.

A system allowing people to do an activation with real time information and location is critical from the school end and the police end. This allows first responders to go directly to where the threat is. I understand that things change and are dynamic, but a starting place on multi-level buildings that encompass seven acres, such as the Sanford High School is critical. This allows first responders to know and approach a critical situation in the most advantageous position, which is critical when seconds matter.

New technology allows officers to follow a map to the person who initiated the call and has the first-hand information. All information is critical for all involved and the quickest and most precise information is priceless.

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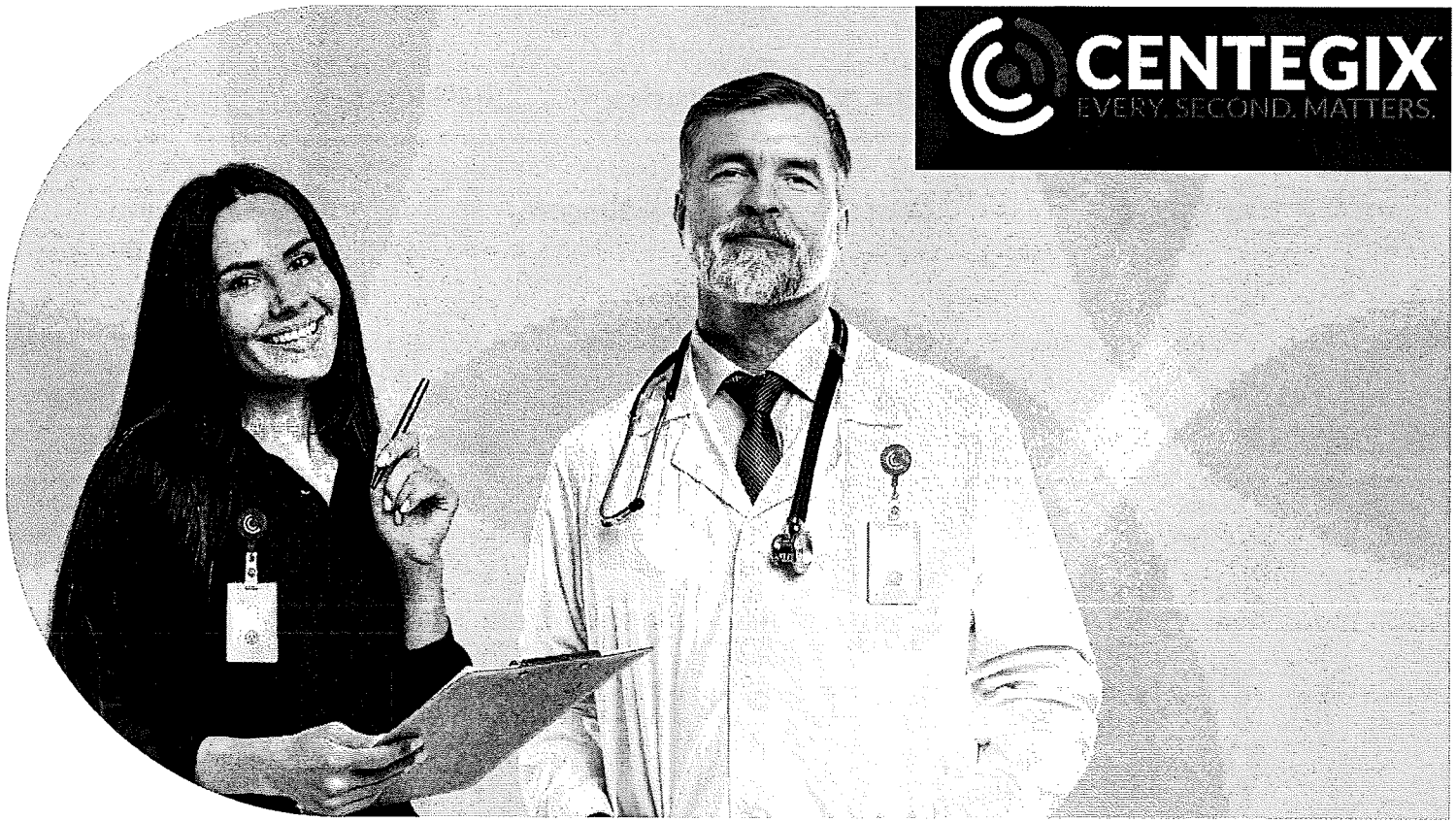


CENTEGIX Blog

The Safety and Simplicity of Wearable Panic Buttons

BY VINCE ZAPPA

MAY 17, 2024



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Wearable panic buttons are an effective workplace safety solution that enables staff to request help with only the press of a button. To ensure they are always within reach, these buttons are worn on a lanyard around the neck or secured via a badge clip. While hospitals were the first to adopt wearable panic buttons as part of their workplace violence safety plans, they are by no means limited to the healthcare setting. Wearable panic buttons are the perfect addition to a school alert system, hospitality business, government offices, and more. Their secret: simplicity.

Let's discuss how user-friendly wearable panic buttons can bolster your hospital

safety plans and school alert systems.

CENTEGIX: A Pioneer in Safety Through Simplicity

CrisisAlert™ is CENTEGIX's wearable panic button solution. CrisisAlert was initially created to reduce response times when unthinkable emergencies like the Parkland school shooting happen. When CENTEGIX was designing the CrisisAlert mobile panic button, it prioritized insights from those who had been directly impacted by school emergencies and relied on feedback from representatives of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Public Safety Commission.

As the design of the wearable panic button was being developed, we moved away from the prototype with multiple buttons in favor of the simplicity of a single button on the badge because humans react to crisis situations in different ways. Under intense stress, we:

- Overlook critical details by fixating on the threat or immediate surroundings
- Experience delayed reaction times and slower information processing
- Make decisions from a heightened emotional state rather than from logical reasoning
- Fall back on ineffective or previously unsuccessful strategies out of confusion or panic

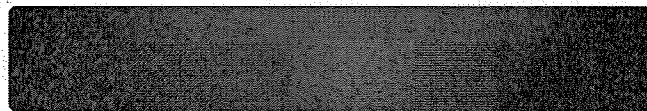
According to the CDC, to help someone facing a crisis, the message must be

simple, credible, and consistent. An effective message must:

- Be repeated
- Come from multiple credible sources
- Be specific to the emergency
- Offer a positive course of action for someone to execute

Speed is also very important when communicating in an emergency. CENTEGIX recognizes that a school alert system should convey timely, consistent messages to help facilitate cooperation and communication during a crisis.

CrisisAlert was initially created to accelerate critical incident response; it was purpose-built for both extreme and everyday situations in which school staff require assistance, such as asthma attacks and environmental threats.



Wearable Panic Buttons Have You Covered

No matter the organization, campus size, or workforce number, CENTEGIX CrisisAlert is there when you need it.

Full campus coverage. CENTEGIX's private, managed network secures every square foot of your organization, so the CrisisAlert wearable duress button functions everywhere. No matter where you are from the inside or out, office or parking area, your alert instantly reaches

responders. Staff can instantly initiate a campus-wide rapid response to emergencies. A campus-wide alert:

- Goes directly to first responders and local administrators, notifying them of who needs help and precisely where they are
- Activates full audio and visual communication campus-wide so everyone knows the campus is in lockdown or sheltering in place and to get to safety as soon as possible
- Notifies 911 dispatch with critical information for responders

Discreet. The CrisisAlert wearable duress button empowers users to quickly and discreetly summon assistance from other coworkers and administrators, who can offer assistance when and where it is needed.

Private managed network. No Wi-Fi or cell signal is needed to initiate an alert.

Schools and healthcare organizations are vital to communities. The nationwide increase in violence in healthcare and schools means safety technology needs to be multidisciplinary.

CENTEGIX CrisisAlert can span sectors. The success in education led CENTEGIX to think about how its school alert system could translate into hospitals, hotels, justice centers, and more. Luckily, it was adaptable to remedy workplace

violence in hospitals and other healthcare organizations.



CENTEGIX CrisisAlert in Schools

The list of potential emergencies for which a wearable panic button may be useful is long, and novel events create novel safety concerns. For example, the American Psychological Association found that rates of violence and aggression against K-12 school personnel were high during the pandemic, despite most schools being remote during the survey. One-third of teachers surveyed reported they experienced at least one incident of verbal or threatening violence from students during the pandemic, including verbal threats, cyberbullying, intimidation, and sexual harassment.

Another common issue in schools is elopement. Student elopement, when a student leaves the school property without permission, usually occurs on the playground or when students are traveling from one point to another

within the school or on the school grounds.

With CrisisAlert as part of your school alert system, every member of your school's staff can request help in any type of emergency and be confident that help is on the way. Principal Sara Bravo of Mandarin High School in Florida has this to say about CrisisAlert:

"The CENTEGIX badges have been a game changer for us. There have been multiple situations, including seizures, a dislocated knee, an allergic reaction, a couple of classroom altercations, and a threatening individual, that have prompted staff to use the three-button press. Our staff response time is significantly shorter with this tool. Responders reach the incident location in 30 seconds or less, regardless of the location on campus. Thankfully we haven't had a need to use the tool for a full school lockdown as of yet, but I'm sure it will happen, and when it does, we will be ready. The decision to move to CENTEGIX was, in my opinion, a great one."

