



## **Introduction:**

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), less than 5% of individuals who have sudden cardiac arrest survive. Unfortunately, many who witness a cardiac arrest are unable to effectively help because they do not know CPR or the chain of survival. Knowing these steps can increase survival by 20% or more. The **HEART Safe** program is based on recognizing all communities who meet specific criteria that help increase the potential for saving the lives of individuals who have sudden cardiac arrest through the use of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and increased public access to defibrillation.

Designation as a **HEART Safe Community** represents a coordinated effort by emergency medical services, fire departments, and police departments, as well as other various town departments, schools, and businesses that have committed to saving lives. By becoming a **HEART Safe Community**, your town, city officials, and citizens will be recognized for taking the time, and making the effort to become an invaluable link in the chain of survival.

## **Do you live in a HEART Safe Community? Do you work for a HEART Safe Entity?**

- If someone in your community suffers a sudden cardiac arrest tomorrow, how likely is he or she to receive rapid access to potentially life-saving treatment?
- How many residents and public safety officials in your community can recognize the symptoms of cardiac arrest and know how to get help “on the way, right away.”
- Who knows cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in your agency/community and is prepared to administer it when necessary?
- Where are automated external defibrillators (AEDs) located, and who has been trained to use them appropriately?
- Does your EMS provider have 12-lead EKG capability and are they trained in Advanced Cardiac Life Support?

**The answers to these questions could determine whether or not your community qualifies as a HEART Safe Community.**

## **The HEART Safe Community Program Promotes:**

- CPR training in the community on a regular basis.
- Public access to defibrillation through strategic placement of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for use by public safety professionals and other trained community members.
- Early advanced care by an ACLS trained professional.
- Providing information on warning signs: Know the signs of heart attack, sudden cardiac arrest, or stroke.
- Providing education on the importance of calling 9-1-1.
- Providing information on prevention and heart health.
- AED placement in all First Responder vehicles.
- Personnel are trained in CPR and cardiac arrest management.
- Locations of AED's are identified by a visible sign or sticker on the outside of the building. 9-1-1 dispatchers are able to notify the caller of the nearest AED if needed.
- Creating an ongoing process to evaluate and improve the "Chain of Survival."
- Planning events or work with outside groups to ensure awareness and improve outcomes from Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

### **Chain of Survival:**

#### **Early access to emergency care**

- Bystanders recognize the symptoms of cardiac arrest and call 9-1-1 immediately.
- EMS dispatchers are equipped with instructions for the caller and can get an Advanced Life Support vehicle to the scene quickly.

#### **Early CPR**

- CPR, when properly administered buys precious minutes until a defibrillator is available.
- Public knowledge and awareness must be increased so that those trained in CPR will actually use it when it is needed.

#### **Early Defibrillation**



- Defibrillation is the delivery of electric shock to restore the heart's normal rhythm.
- Early defibrillation is considered to be the most critical link in the chain of survival.
- New AED's are light-weight, sturdy, and easy to use by anyone who has been trained.
- AED's should only be used by individuals certified by defibrillation training programs that have medical oversight and are coordinated with EMS.

### **Early Advanced Care**

- Advanced care is delivered by an Advanced Life Support response vehicle staffed by paramedics trained in Advanced Cardiac Life Support.
- Medications and oxygen therapy delivered by paramedics can be critical to the survival of cardiac arrest victims.



### **Required Criteria to become a HEART Safe Community:**

- Designation of a lead organization to oversee the HEART Safe Community effort.
- At least two CPR/AED training sessions are conducted in the community each month.

- Local Law Enforcement Agency dispatches trained personnel equipped with AEDs to any possible cardiac arrest. All police officers in the community are AED/ CPR trained.
- Schools and municipal buildings have an effective emergency response plan that includes CPR and AED access.
- AED's are placed in the community with appropriate trained personnel.
- Advanced Life Support is dispatched to appropriate emergencies and providers are defibrillation capable, have 12-lead EKG, and maintain certification.
- Have an ongoing process to evaluate and improve the "Chain of Survival" and overall cardiovascular health in the community.
- All fire departments have CPR/AED training.