

American Heart Association

"It is essential to integrate the concept of early defibrillation into an effective emergency cardiac care system. This is best characterized by the "Chain of Survival" concept, which includes early access to the emergency medical services system, early cardiopulmonary resuscitation when needed, early defibrillation when indicated, and early advanced care. To achieve the goal of early defibrillation, the American Heart Association endorses the position that all emergency personnel should be trained and permitted to operate an appropriately maintained defibrillator, if their professional activities require that they respond to persons experiencing cardiac arrest. This includes all first responding emergency personnel, both hospital and non-hospital (e.g., non-EMT first responders, firefighters, volunteer emergency personnel, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, nurses and physicians). To further facilitate early defibrillation, it is essential that a defibrillator be immediately available to emergency personnel responding to a cardiac arrest. Therefore all emergency ambulances and other emergency vehicles that respond to or transport cardiac patients should be equipped with a defibrillator." *Circulation* 1991;83(6):2233.

Public Access Defibrillation : A Statement for Healthcare Professionals From the American Heart Association Task Force on Automatic External Defibrillation

"Early bystander cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and rapid defibrillation are the two major contributors to survival of adult victims of sudden cardiac arrest. The AHA supports efforts to provide prompt defibrillation to victims of cardiac arrest. Automatic external defibrillation is one of the most promising methods for achieving rapid defibrillation. In public access defibrillation, the technology of defibrillation and training in its use are accessible to the community. The AHA believes that this is the next step in strengthening the Chain of Survival. Public access defibrillation will involve considerable societal change and will succeed only through the strong efforts of the AHA and others with a commitment to improving emergency cardiac care.

Public access defibrillation will include:

- Performance of defibrillation by laypersons at home and by firefighters, police, security personnel, and nonphysician care providers in the community
- Exploration of the use of bystander-initiated automatic external defibrillation in rural communities and congested urban areas where resuscitation strategies have had little success.

The AHA can also play a major role by:

- Increasing public awareness that defibrillation improves the rate of survival from an often fatal condition that each day affects 1,000 Americans
- Ensuring that objective, current research data are used to guide implementation of these changes in performance and teaching of CPR
- Working with medical manufacturers, legislators, and governmental agencies to promote safety and efficacy, reduce cost, and update training requirements to facilitate implementation of public access defibrillation. Broader use of automatic external defibrillators should also lead to readiness tests and features that deter both misuse and misapplication. Meaningful change will occur only with the broad public support that has traditionally characterized the AHA's efforts in the fight against heart disease and stroke." *Circulation* 1995;92:2763.