

## **News for Immediate Release**

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## Department of Health Launches New CPR Education and Training Initiative

**Harrisburg** – A new campaign, "Lend a Hand, Save a Life," will teach the general public about sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) and train 250,000 people in Pennsylvania in hands-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

The American Heart Association (AHA) has been recommending hands-only CPR for adults since 2008. Hands-only CPR has three easy steps: call 911, push hard and fast in the center of the chest, and use an automated external defibrillator (AED) if available. This type of CPR has been proven as effective as CPR with breaths in treating adult cardiac arrest victims.

"Sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death among Americans, with 80 percent of events occurring in the home," Acting Secretary of Health Michael Wolf said. "It's our hope that this program will successfully educate Pennsylvanians on how to respond because CPR conducted by an immediate bystander in a cardiac event doubles or triples the patient's chance of survival."

The new campaign is a joint collaboration between the AHA, Department of Health's Bureau of Emergency Services (EMS) and the Pennsylvania HeartRescue Project.

The goal of the campaign is to encourage CPR trainers to collaborate with local schools, sports teams, colleges, businesses and community groups to host CPR training events and incorporate training into large-scale public events, such as five-minute, hands-only CPR demonstrations during halftime at a sports game or during a concert intermission.

CPR trainers can register events online at <a href="www.heart.org/lendahandsavealife">www.heart.org/lendahandsavealife</a> to track the number of people trained and the date and location of the training. Numbers will be reflected on the website so the public can track progress, and prizes will be distributed at an awards ceremony at the close of the campaign to the top participating training groups.

"Improving survival from sudden cardiac arrest begins with making sure everyone knows how to immediately call 911 and start CPR," said Kathryn DiPuppo Tucker, program director of the Pennsylvania HeartRescue Project, an organization that seeks to improve survival rates in Pennsylvania by 50 percent. "This campaign is an exciting opportunity to empower individuals and communities, and ultimately save more lives."

"Very few victims of sudden cardiac arrest outside of a hospital setting survive, as survival rates drop 10 percent for every minute that passes following a cardiac arrest," said Dr. Jeffrey Mandak, AHA Capital Region board member and cardiologist at Fulton County Medical Center and PinnacleHealth. "EMS often cannot arrive onsite soon enough to save the victim. Increasing familiarity of CPR and the use of AEDs in the community can help to improve chances of survival."

The "Lend a Hand, Save a Life" campaign will run through May 26, 2013, the end of National EMS Week.

For additional information on the campaign, please visit <a href="https://www.heart.org/lendahandsavealife">www.heart.org/lendahandsavealife</a>.

For more information on sudden cardiac arrest, please visit <a href="https://www.heartrescuenow.com">www.heartrescuenow.com</a>.

For CPR training, contact the American Heart Association at <a href="https://www.heart.org/cpr">www.heart.org/cpr</a> or the American Red Cross at <a href="https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class">www.redcross.org/take-a-class</a>.

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