

CPR-Responding in a Cardiac Emergency

Cardiac arrest – an electrical malfunction in the heart that causes an irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia) and disrupts the flow of blood to the brain, lungs and other organs – is a leading cause of death. Each year, more than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in the United States. When a person has a cardiac arrest, survival depends on immediately getting CPR from someone nearby, and if possible, defibrillation, an electronic reset of the heart rhythm. Effective bystander CPR, provided immediately after cardiac arrest, can double a victim's chance of survival. Almost 90 percent of people who suffer out-of-hospital cardiac arrests die. CPR, especially if performed in the first few minutes of cardiac arrest, can double or triple a person's chance of survival.

Part of our Wellness program is helping people decide their wishes around receiving resuscitation. But in a moment of cardiac crisis, bystanders will not know your wishes, and the default is to contact EMS immediately and to initiate CPR. We know that our communities play host to many non-residents each day. We also know that staff trained to perform CPR are not always present to direct the response. Our public spaces are equipped with Automatic External defibrillators (AED), one in the meeting house and one on each floor of the INN. State regulations designate us a Public Access AED facility, meaning that our devices have auditory instructions, and anyone who attempts to intervene is covered by Good Samaritan laws from any liability.

But the key to saving lives is timely provision of *effective CPR*, which means having someone on hand with training. This raises many questions for our community, but one possibility is there may be some among you who may want to do CPR training. Our partners at Cooley Dickinson can provide a three hour, on-site American Association training for up to ten people for a total cost of \$500. Campus Associations might want to take up this discussion or a collection of individuals may form. Either way, if there is interest, I would be happy to set-up the training. Contact me at rolmsted.lathrop.kendal.org or at 437-5375

-Rob Olmsted