



Maine HeartSafe Communities

What is HeartSafe Communities?

The Maine Cardiovascular Health Program and the Maine Emergency Medical Services (EMS) office are partnering to bring HeartSafe Communities to Maine. It is a recognition program based on the “chain of survival,” and it is now being implemented in several states and countries.

The purpose of HeartSafe is to recognize the excellent work being done by EMS services throughout Maine and to provide opportunities to enhance partnerships, resources and services to improve cardiovascular health and decrease deaths and disability due to sudden cardiac arrest, heart attack and stroke.

Being HeartSafe is a team effort

Early recognition of the signs and symptoms associated with sudden cardiac arrest, heart attack and stroke, immediate access to emergency services, and prompt medical treatment are all crucial to prevent future cardiovascular events, save lives and reduce medical costs and disability. The Maine HeartSafe Community designation promotes enhancements to each of these important links and recognizes a community’s dedication to improving its “chain of survival” through partnerships with the local Emergency Medical Services program.



What it takes to be HeartSafe

HeartSafe applicants must work with their community partners to meet the following **Basic Recognition Criteria:**

- Community CPR training sessions (number required based on population)
- Cardiovascular-related education and awareness activities
- EMS first response-designated vehicles equipped with Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)
- Public AED placement and training
- Advanced Life Support dispatched as primary or backup responders to all priority medical emergencies
- Ongoing evaluation of community “chain of survival”

Important Facts

- Heart disease and stroke account for one in three Maine deaths (33%) and are the leading causes of death in Maine.
 - In 2002, there were 3,164 deaths in Maine due to diseases of the heart, and 822 Maine lives were lost to stroke.
- In the U.S. about 335,000 people a year die of coronary heart disease (CHD) without being hospitalized or admitted to an emergency room. Most of these are sudden deaths caused by cardiac arrest.
- It’s estimated that more than 95 percent of cardiac arrest victims die before reaching the hospital. In places where defibrillation is provided within 5 to 7 minutes, the survival rate from sudden cardiac arrest is as high as 49 percent.

For more information

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