

For Immediate Release
3/20/09



CONTACT:
Kate Lino: (214) 706-1325
Cindy Lewis (broadcast): (214) 706-1433

Association wants one million people to commit to CPR training

DALLAS, March 18 — Senior offensive tackle Matt Nader felt like his chest exploded when he collapsed on the sidelines at his high school football game. Quick action by his parents who knew cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the availability of an onsite automated external defibrillator (AED) saved his life.

The American Heart Association wants a million people to commit to learning CPR as part of National CPR & AED Awareness Week, June 1–7, to help save cardiac arrest victims like Matt. The week encourages the public to get CPR training and learn how to use an AED. It also encourages them to log their training on the association’s Web site. The site will feature a live map that will update in real time when people submit their information.

It could happen on the football field, during a bike ride or while dropping off the kids for an after-school activity. Every year, EMS treats about 300,000 victims of out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest. More than 92 percent of people who suffer cardiac arrest outside the hospital will die from it. Without immediate CPR, the chance of surviving out-of-hospital cardiac arrest drops 7 percent to 10 percent for each minute that passes without defibrillation. Unfortunately, less than one third of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest victims receive bystander CPR.

There is a great need for more CPR and AED training. Seventy percent of bystanders who respond to a cardiac emergency have either never received CPR and AED training or their training was more than five years ago, according to a 2008 American Heart Association survey. To keep skills current, training should occur at least every two years, the association says.

“By learning CPR, you are taking care of yourself and your family with just a small time commitment,” said Michael Sayre, M.D., chair-elect of the American Heart Association’s Emergency Cardiovascular Care Committee. “The more you practice, the more confident your skills will be in a real emergency. We want people to keep their CPR skills current and see learning and practicing CPR as critical health maintenance.”

There are two ways to become CPR trained: take a traditional classroom-based course, or get a self-paced CPR Anytime kit, which includes an inflatable manikin and instructional DVD.

(more)

People can also learn the steps for Hands-Only CPR by viewing free videos online. Hands-Only CPR is for people who are unsure of their CPR skills and who witness an adult suddenly collapse. The steps are simple: Call 9-1-1 and push hard and fast in the center of the chest until help arrives.

Since 1995, the American Heart Association has recommended the development of lay rescuer AED programs to improve outcomes from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. To maximize the effectiveness of these programs, the AHA emphasizes the importance of organization, planning, training, linking with the EMS system, and establishing a process of continuous quality improvement.

For more information about National CPR & AED Awareness Week and to find out more about training, visit www.americanheart.org/CPR&AEDweek or call **1-877-AHA-4CPR**.

###

About the American Heart Association

Founded in 1924, we're the nation's oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to building healthier lives, free of heart disease and stroke. To help prevent, treat and defeat these diseases—America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers—we fund cutting-edge research, conduct lifesaving public and professional educational programs, and advocate to protect public health. To learn more or join us in helping all Americans, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit americanheart.org.