BC Public Access to Defibrillation (PAD) Program

- The Heart and Stroke Foundation (HSF) and the B.C. Government have partnered to implement the BC Public Access to Defibrillation (PAD) Program which provides automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for public places where large amounts of people gather. B.C. has contributed $1 million to the Heart and Stroke Foundation’s $2 million defibrillator program.
- BC Ambulance Services (BCAS) is a program partner providing on site orientation, on-going program oversight and an AED Registry, linked to 911 dispatch.
- Through the PAD Program, 450 AEDs will be donated by 2015 to public places like recreation and community centres, arenas, pools, libraries, seniors facilities, parks and beaches.

What is cardiac arrest?

- A cardiac arrest occurs when the heart stops beating and the victim is no longer breathing.
- Cardiac arrest can be caused by heart disease, drowning, stroke, electrocution, suffocation, drug overdose, motor vehicle accident or other injury.
- For every one minute delay in defibrillation (returning the heart to a normal rhythm), the survival rate of a cardiac arrest victim decreases by 7-10 per cent.

PAD Champions

- BCAS paramedics who volunteer with the program become ‘PAD champions’ in their communities.
- PAD champions provide orientation sessions for staff at venues with an AED on how to correctly use and maintain the device, are available for ongoing support for the trainees and follow up with the team in the event that an AED is used.
- BCAS also compiles a registry, linked to the ambulance dispatch information system, which includes all of the locations in the province where PAD Program AEDs have been installed.
- When a bystander calls 9-1-1 for an ambulance, the dispatcher will know if an AED is available at the location and will assist the bystander to use the device on the cardiac arrest patient.

Automated External Defibrillators

- Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are portable, easy-to-use devices that examine the electrical output from the heart and determine if the patient is in a shockable rhythm.
- If a shockable rhythm is detected, the bystander is instructed to press a button to deliver a shock or series of shocks to the victim’s heart; stopping the heart to allow it to return to a normal rhythm.
- If no shockable rhythm is detected, no shock can be given and the bystander is instructed to perform CPR while paramedics are en route.
- Until recently, only medical and paramedical staff used AEDs. However, the advent of safe, user-friendly AEDs makes it possible to extend AEDs to people with no medical background.
- The training required to use an AED is brief and is often delivered as part of a CPR course.
• The current survival rate for an out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest is only about five per cent. When CPR and AEDs are used together in the first few minutes during a cardiac arrest, survival rates may increase up to 75 per cent.

Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
• CPR is a combination of rescue breathing and/or chest compressions that keep blood circulating in a person who has stopped breathing or whose heart has stopped beating naturally.
• CPR can be administered by anyone who has had basic training or is being coached by someone who is trained, such as a BC Ambulance Service emergency medical dispatcher.
• To find a CPR course in your area, visit the Red Cross (www.redcross.ca) or St. John Ambulance (www.sja.ca/BCYukon) web sites.

Contact: Lisa Pilling
BCAS Communications
250 953-3680