

Defibrillators, CPR: Get on board, people

WE REFER to Mr Jim Simon's letter on Monday, "More heart defibrillators will save lives".

The Singapore Heart Foundation (SHF) and the National Resuscitation Council (NRC) agree with Mr Simon that Automated External defibrillators (AEDs) can improve the chances of surviving cardiac arrest, and that public facility owners should be encouraged to install AEDs in their facilities. To be successful, the installation of AEDs should be combined with a programme of training in CPR and use of the defibrillator.

Last January, the SHF and NRC together with the National Fire and Emergency

Preparedness Council jointly launched the Combined CPR+AED programme at commercial premises. This event saw the installation of AEDs and CPR training being implemented in seven organisations in Singapore. In addition, 107 commercial facilities pledged to support and move towards implementation of the programme at their locations.

Since then, many have begun doing so. A number of community centres, country clubs, hospitals and organisers of mass events have taken the initiative to make AEDs available on their premises. The NRC's guidelines on the management of an AED programme provide a clear basis

for building operators to run such efforts successfully.

In addition to AED installation, early administration of CPR is another major factor in improving survival from cardiac arrest. We encourage members of the public to undergo CPR training in any of the more than 30 NRC-accredited training centres in the country. Many of these also teach the use of AEDs.

To further increase the accessibility of CPR training, SHF recently launched a CPR 3A (Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere) Kit that enables users to learn the skill in their own time using an instructional DVD and a customised manikin. The tutorial video, which is available in English and Mandarin, also includes a segment that explains the use of AED.

The SHF and NRC are working with grassroots organisations to promote training in CPR and AED use as part of a wider effort in community first-aid training and responsiveness. We will also continue to work with other like-minded organisations to further raise public awareness of the importance of CPR and AED in increasing survival rates from out-of-hospital cardiac arrests. We would like to encourage more building owners to equip their facilities with AEDs.

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