Official Statement – Automated External Defibrillators

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The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), as a leader in health care for the physically active, strongly believes that the treatment of sudden cardiac arrest is a priority. An AED program should be part of an athletic trainers emergency action plan. NATA strongly encourages athletic trainers, in every work setting, to have access to an AED. Athletic trainers are encouraged to make an AED part of their standard emergency equipment. In addition, in conjunction and coordination with local EMS, athletic trainers should take a primary role in implementing a comprehensive AED program within their work setting.

Rationale

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), each year, approximately 250,000 Americans die of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) outside of the hospital.[1] As many as 7,000 children die of SCA each year. [2] Evidence suggests that the risk of a cardiac event is higher during or immediately following, vigorous exercise. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is critical to maintaining the supply of oxygen to vital organs, but the single most effective treatment for cardiac arrest is defibrillation, a shock delivered to the heart using a small electronic device known as a defibrillator. The AHA recommends defibrillation within 3-5 minutes or sooner.[1] Most communities cannot meet these guidelines. As a result, nationwide, survival from SCA is only about 5%. In some communities where shocks from an AED and CPR are provided within 3-5 minutes by the first person on the scene, survival rates are as high as 48-74%.[1]

1 American Heart Association, 2003. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics – 2003 Update
2 Berger, S.,Dhalia, A.,Freidberg,D.Z.1999. Sudden cardiac arrest death in infants, children and adolescents. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 46(2):221-34