



Program Background

Sudden cardiac arrest is a major cause of death in the United States. It claims about 220,000 lives each year. That's three lives every seven minutes.

Sudden cardiac arrest means the heart's pumping chambers suddenly stop contracting effectively. As a result, the heart can't pump blood. This can happen suddenly, without warning. Often it's due to heart disease, but there are other causes such as electrical shock or drowning.

Right now only about 5 percent or less of sudden cardiac arrest victims survive. A strong chain of survival can increase this to 20 percent or more. That would save at least 40,000 lives a year.

A strong chain of survival can help more victims survive cardiac arrest. But these aren't the only people who'll benefit. People who have a heart attack, stroke or other emergencies will also benefit.

Our Involvement with Chain of Survival Activities

Montgomery EMS is involved on many levels in strengthening the chain of survival. For example, our Operation Heartbeat initiative aims to increase public awareness and support for emergency care. It does this by mobilizing the community and implementing programs and activities to strengthen each link of the chain. These programs include mass CPR training, Public Education and awareness as well as Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) Programs. Currently there are PAD programs in place at some local businesses, on the campus of Austin Peay State University, various government offices and several industries within Clarksville-Montgomery County.

This program is a team effort with Montgomery County EMS and the American Heart Association.

To learn more about emergency care activities and how you can help make the chain of survival stronger in your community, contact the American Heart Association office by calling 1-877-AHA-4CPR (1-877-242-4277).