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Hope lives here.

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**Youth Heart Watch at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and  
School District of Philadelphia Partner to Save Students' Lives**

*Youth Heart Watch at CHOP Presents Automated External Defibrillators to School District of  
Philadelphia Middle Schools*

**PHILADELPHIA, Pa.** – Each year, hundreds of children die nationwide from sudden cardiac arrest. Many occur at school sports events and most of these children have no previous warning. To protect against such tragedies, Youth Heart Watch at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) today presented an automated external defibrillator (AED) to every middle school in the School District of Philadelphia.

“As a pediatric cardiologist, I follow hundreds of children from the Philadelphia region with cardiac issues who are at risk for sudden cardiac arrest,” said Victoria Vetter, M.D., medical director of Youth Heart Watch and pediatric cardiologist at CHOP. “AEDs save lives. For children with cardiac issues and those living with an undiagnosed cardiac condition, the availability of an AED in their schools could mean the difference between life and death. Making schools safer for our children, their teachers, and the community is an appropriate way for us to contribute.”

“On behalf of The School District of Philadelphia, I would like to thank CHOP for their generous donation of AEDs for every District middle school,” said School District of Philadelphia Superintendent Dr. Arlene Ackerman. “CHOP has worked with the District for years to get AEDs installed in schools throughout Philadelphia. The District's Office of Health, Safety and Physical Education is committed to making AEDs readily available to schools throughout Philadelphia and to have personnel trained to use them in an emergency.”

The District middle schools that will receive the AED machines are: A.M.Y. at James Martin, A.M.Y. Northwest, Baldi, Barratt, Beeber, Clemente, Conwell, Feltonville School of Arts and Sciences, Harding, Hill-Freedman, Jones, LaBrum, Leeds, Meehan, Middle Years Alternative (MYA), Penn Treaty, Pepper, Roosevelt, Shaw, Sheridan West, Stetson, Tilden, Edwin Vare, Wagner, Grover Washington and Woodrow Wilson.

CHOP has already begun to train District personnel at the middle schools on how to have a successful AED program. All the middle schools should have the AED equipment in their schools by the end of this week.

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AEDs are small, easy to operate devices that are extremely effective in reviving victims of sudden cardiac arrest if administered immediately after the heart stops. They are safe to operate because they will not shock anyone whose heart is beating normally and who is not in cardiac arrest. Pennsylvania's Good Samaritan law protects people administering an AED to someone experiencing cardiac arrest.

Pennsylvania enacted a law eight years ago providing two AEDs per school district in the state. In 2003, Youth Heart Watch at CHOP, partnered with the Philadelphia Trial Lawyers who funded AEDs for every School District of Philadelphia high school that were open at that time. The District also has AED's available for use at all of its athletic complexes, better known as "Athletic Super Sites."

Over the years, The School District of Philadelphia has trained about 600 of its personnel in schools to use AEDs and perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Youth Heart Watch will provide training grants to fund CPR and AED training in the District's middle schools.

Youth Heart Watch at Children's Hospital advocates the placement of AEDs in every school in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. In addition to the AEDs, the program helps educate students and staff about sudden cardiac death and train school personnel in the use of AEDs and CPR, so that proper care can be administered in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest, as immediate care is essential. A designated Youth Heart Watch coordinator from the Cardiac Center at Children's Hospital helps schools implement this vital AED program.

Schools and families should be aware of the warning symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest. Symptoms include: fainting or severe chest pain during exercise, a sudden change in exercise tolerance or shortness of breath (not asthma related) during exercise, and a sensation of rapid heart beats. A family history of early (before 35 years) sudden cardiac arrest is another important factor as the conditions that cause sudden cardiac arrest in the young are frequently inherited.

Each year, approximately 300,000 people die from sudden cardiac arrest in the U.S. including an estimated 1,000 children and young athletes. Most of the time, neither children nor their parents have any idea that they might be susceptible to sudden cardiac arrest. In some cases, a sharp blow to the chest can send a person into cardiac arrest.

While Emergency Medical Service ambulances have AEDs, the key to successful resuscitation is immediacy. Application within three to five minutes of the heart stopping using an onsite AED is usually successful. With every passing minute after the collapse that the patient must wait, the odds of a successful resuscitation decrease about ten percent per minute.

About The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia was founded in 1855 as the nation's first pediatric hospital. Through its long-standing commitment to providing exceptional patient care, training new generations of pediatric healthcare professionals and pioneering major research initiatives, Children's Hospital has fostered many discoveries that have benefited children worldwide. Its pediatric research program is among the largest in the country, ranking second in National Institutes of Health funding. In addition, its unique family-centered care and public service programs have brought the 441-bed hospital recognition as a leading advocate for children and adolescents. For more information, visit <http://www.chop.edu>.