



CAEP | Canadian Association
of Emergency Physicians
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des médecins d'urgence

News Release

Canada's Emergency Doctors Push to Improve Rate of "Bystander" CPR Assistance

Ottawa, October 13, 2011 – Canadians who suffer cardiac arrest outside of a hospital are three to four times more likely to survive if they receive cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). According to the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians (CAEP), such assistance is provided in only about one-quarter of cases.

In a position statement on "bystander" CPR to be published today in the *Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine (CJEM)*, CAEP says it is not acceptable that vast numbers of witnessed cardiac arrest victims do not receive bystander CPR. More than 20,000 people suffer out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in Canada each year, with 85 per cent of cases occurring in residential dwellings. Currently, less than 10 per cent of these people survive.

Every Canadian should be trained in CPR and all Canadians should respond and provide chest compressions, with or without mouth-to-mouth ventilation, whether they are trained or not, CAEP says.

Dr. Christian Vaillancourt, one of the lead authors of the position statement and a Senior Scientist at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, says "emergency department doctors too often see the missed opportunities to save someone's life had CPR been administered promptly. Many more lives can be saved, but we need stronger inducements and a systematic approach to ensure more people in the community are prepared and ready to perform CPR." Dr. Vaillancourt is an Emergency Physician at The Ottawa Hospital and Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine at the University of Ottawa.

The position statement's recommendations include:

- compulsory CPR education in high schools
- targeting senior citizens since they represent the population most at risk to witness a cardiac arrest
- Tax exemptions for companies providing certified CPR training courses to employees and to individuals who take similar certified CPR education
- consideration of dispatch-assisted CPR instructions from emergency services for bystanders
- the creation of a coalition of stakeholder organizations to spearhead a national public awareness campaign.

“The Heart and Stroke Foundation applauds this initiative,” says Manuel Arango, Director, Health Policy, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. “The Foundation is dedicated to strengthening the *Chain of Survival*™ in communities across Canada.” He adds, “Early access to the EMS system through 9-1-1 or local emergency numbers, early CPR, early defibrillation, and early advanced care are essential links in this chain.”

“Paramedics often see firsthand the benefits of CPR. We know these patients have the best chance for survival. Paramedics are proud to support the CAEP recommendations for CPR,” says Pierre Poirier, Executive Director, Paramedic Association of Canada

The position paper is available on the CAEP website: www.caep.ca

In addition to Dr. Vaillancourt, members of the CAEP working group that developed the position statement on bystander CPR are: **Dr. Norman Epstein**, Toronto, ON; **Dr. Sheldon Cheskes**, Toronto, ON; **Dr. Justin Maloney**, Ottawa, ON; **Dr. Ian. G. Stiell**, Ottawa, ON; **Dr. James Christenson**, Vancouver, BC; **Dr. Andrew Affleck**, Thunder Bay, ON; **Dr. Andrew H. Travers**, Dartmouth, NS; **Dr. Martin H. Osmond**, Ottawa, ON; **Patrick Forgie**, Peel Region, ON; and **Jason Slenys**, Peel Region, ON.

As the national voice of Emergency Medicine, CAEP provides continuing medical education and advocates on behalf of emergency physicians and their patients. In cooperation with other specialties and committees, CAEP plays a vital role in the development of national standards and clinical guidelines. For more information: www.caep.ca

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