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FIRE
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HFD, Rockingham Co. Fire Rescue team up for lifesaving mobile app

PulsePoint Respond is a real-time view into dispatch, increasing community awareness of emergency events and alerting CPR-trained citizens to cardiac arrest victims nearby

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The Harrisonburg area and local emergency responders now have a new tool to help foster a healthy and civically engaged community.

PulsePoint, a free-to-download mobile app, has a number of tools focused on saving lives no matter where an incident occurs. The app can alert CPR-trained citizens of cardiac events in their vicinity so they may administer aid, while also helping inform the community of emergency activity happening in real time. Additionally, the app helps build a comprehensive Automated External Defibrillator (AED) registry across the community.

PulsePoint Respond empowers citizens to provide life-saving assistance to victims of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). App subscribers who have indicated they are trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and willing to assist in case of an emergency can be notified if someone nearby is having a SCA and may require CPR. If the cardiac emergency is in a public place, the location-aware application will alert users in the vicinity of the need for CPR simultaneous with the dispatch of advanced medical care. The application also directs these potential rescuers to the exact location of the closest AED.

“With PulsePoint we hope to increase bystander involvement in time-sensitive medical calls by increasing the use of CPR and AEDs, while also keeping the community informed, in real time, of all emergency activities,” Harrisonburg Fire Chief Matthew Tobia said.

“It gives our residents and visitors the ability to know when a cardiac arrest is occurring close by, locate AEDs in the area, and perform potentially lifesaving CPR while our personnel respond to the scene,” Rockingham County Fire Rescue Chief Jeremy Holloway added. “It also shows them general information for all 9-1-1 calls to keep them better informed of what’s going on in our community.”



The latest AHA guidelines, published in Circulation, states that such community programs could increase bystander CPR to the roughly 350,000 cardiac arrests that happen outside the hospital each year.

“In addition to nearby ‘CPR-needed’ notifications, PulsePoint subscribers can follow their local fire department and choose to be notified of significant events that may impact their family,” Richard Price, president of the nonprofit PulsePoint Foundation, said. “These informational notifications provide an early and automatic heads-up to local threats such as wildland fires, flooding and utility emergencies.”



The free app can be downloaded through the App Store or Google Play.

About Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Although a heart attack can lead to sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), the two are not the same. SCA is when the heart malfunctions and suddenly stops beating unexpectedly, whereas a heart attack is when blood flow to the heart is blocked, but the heart continues to beat. Each year, more than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur, making it the leading cause of death in the United States. Survival rates nationally for SCA are less than 8 percent, but delivery of CPR can sustain life until paramedics arrive by maintaining vital blood flow to the heart and brain. However, only about a third of SCA victims receive bystander CPR. Without CPR, brain damage or death can occur in minutes. The average EMS response time is nine minutes, even in urban settings; after 10 minutes there is little chance of successful resuscitation. The American Heart Association estimates that effective bystander CPR, provided immediately after SCA, can double or triple a person’s chance of survival.



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