School Cardiac Emergency Preparedness &
Project ADAM Heart Safe School Designation

Background for School Administrators

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) – A Public Health Issue

- More than 350,000 out-of-hospital Sudden Cardiac Arrests (SCA) occur in the United States each year and approximately 10 percent survive.¹
- Studies show that prompt bystander Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) use could double or even triple survival rates.²
- In a study of more than 2,000 schools over a two year time frame, the SCA survival rate in schools with AED programs increased to 71 percent.³
- On any given day, as much as 20 percent of the entire United States population is in a school.⁴

Background on Project ADAM’s Work

- Project ADAM began in 1999 after the death of Adam Lemel, a 17-year-old Whitefish Bay, WI, high school student who collapsed and died while playing basketball.
- Adam suffered a Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) in which ventricular fibrillation occurred, a condition in which the ventricles cannot pump blood into the body. Defibrillation, or an AED, could have saved his life.
- Since 1999, Project ADAM has advocated for AED placement in schools and communities. The Heart Safe School program ensures equipment is maintained and there is a team of trained staff ready to respond to emergencies in schools across the country.

Evidence-Based Practice in School Cardiac Emergency Preparedness

- Over the past 20 years, school and community CPR/AED programs have become more commonplace, yet we continue to hear stories of tragic lives lost to SCA that could have been prevented.
- In 2016, like-minded national organizations including AHA and Project ADAM teamed up to develop a Cardiac Emergency Preparedness in schools policy statement.

Justifying Staff Time for CPR/AED Training and Drilling

- Project ADAM recommends a designated emergency response team comprised of at least 10% of school staff trained in CPR/AED in the event there is a sudden collapse or medical emergency.
- An AED drill can be conducted in less time than a fire drill. Plan for 5-10 minutes, including a debrief with the team afterward.
- Some schools choose to conduct medical emergency drills which cover a multitude of possible medical emergencies that could occur, not solely cardiac. We recommend the AED is brought to the scene each time.

Project ADAM Heart Safe School Designation

- All Project ADAM educational material and Heart Safe School checklist program criteria reflect recommendations outlined in the Cardiac Emergency Response Planning for Schools: A Policy Statement.

Project ADAM National, Updated January 2021
For an up-to-date version, please visit www.projectadam.com
Since 1999, over 4,000 schools across the country have achieved this designation with hundreds more in progress.

Project ADAM’s Heart Safe School program ensures our schools have well maintained AED equipment, CPR/AED trained staff and a practiced plan to respond to a sudden collapse on campus, giving our students, staff and visitors the best possible chance to survive a SCA.

**Stories of lives saved**

*Student’s life saved at Franklin High School - Franklin, WI*

*Athlete revived at school – Nashville, TN*

**For More Information:**

[www.projectadam.com](http://www.projectadam.com)

[www.facebook.com/supportprojectadam](http://www.facebook.com/supportprojectadam)

[https://www.instagram.com/supportprojectadam/](https://www.instagram.com/supportprojectadam/)

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i Source: [American Heart Association Heart and Stroke Statistics - 2019 Update](https://www.americanheart.org/)

ii Source: [NIH article: Recent advances and controversies in adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/)

iii Source: [A 2-year prospective study from the National Registry for AED Use in Sports](https://www.ajcn.org/article/S0002-9149(19)30083-9/)

iv Source: [A Statement for Healthcare Providers, Policymakers, School Administrators and Community Leaders](https://www.projectadam.com/)

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