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Opinions

Buffalo Bills, American Heart Association teaming up to save lives through CPR

Five-year commitment will add lifesavers to chain of survival in Buffalo & Western New York

Guest Editorial by the American Heart Association

With nearly 3 out of 4 cardiac arrests outside of the hospital occurring in homes, knowing how to perform CPR is critically important. CPR, especially if performed immediately, could double or triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival. That is why the American Heart Association, the worldwide leader in resuscitation science and education, and the Buffalo Bills are adding lifesavers to the chain of survival through training and education. A five-year, \$1 million commitment by the Buffalo Bills is an organizational priority following the cardiac arrest incidents of both Buffalo Bills co-owner Kim Pegula last summer and safety Damar Hamlin during "Monday Night Football" on Jan. 2.

"We are very excited and proud to announce our partnership with the American Heart Association, with the goal of working together to help increase the chances of surviving a cardiac arrest. Over the last year, we learned first-hand the impact of a cardiac arrest incident with Kim Pegula, Damar Hamlin and too many others in our community," said Bills EVP/COO Ron Raccuia. "Alongside the American Heart Association, we hope to educate and empower the WNY region to learn lifesaving skills including hands-only CPR, the role of AEDs and the importance of receiving timely medical attention. Our hope is to provide everyone in Buffalo, including those in under-resourced areas who would not normally have access to similar education and training, the ability to save a life if that time ever presents itself."

The American Heart Association and the Buffalo Bills plan to train thousands of Western New Yorkers in Hands-Only CPR over the next five years through community empowerment events, each aimed at training hundreds of people. Quick, simple and easy-to-learn, Hands-Only CPR has been shown to be as effective in the first few minutes as conventional CPR for cardiac arrest at home, at work or in public.

The work will also include community education, Bills training camp and game day events, social media awareness, and education campaigns and distribution of CPR

resources to local youth sports teams and leagues. The goal is to increase the confidence and ability of members of the community to perform bystander CPR. Because about 70% of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen at home, odds are the person who needs CPR will be a family member or friend.

"From seeing Damar Hamlin collapse, to reading about Kim Pegula being saved by a loved one, the importance of CPR has been in the forefront of the Buffalo community," said Jason Stulb, executive director of the American Heart Association, Buffalo/Niagara. "Unfortunately, too many sudden cardiac arrest victims don't get the help those two did. Knowing how to respond in a cardiac emergency when seconds matter is literally the difference between life and death. Thanks to support from the Buffalo Bills, we will be able to improve the chances of surviving a cardiac arrest in our community. More people will be ready to respond in those crucial first moments after cardiac arrest."

In addition to the bystander efforts, the American Heart Association and the Buffalo Bills will focus on CPR education for youth sports coaches. As a part of the collaboration, 200 CPR & First Aid in Youth Sports Training Kits will be placed in the Western New York community. These training kits are designed for youth coaches to ensure they and their community know the lifesaving skills of CPR, how to use an AED, and how to help during sports-related emergencies. Each kit can train approximately 300 people per year. Over the five years of this program, 180,000 people could become potential lifesavers utilizing the kit to learn.

"Through this commitment, we will provide education and awareness on a variety of levels," said Bills Executive Director, Buffalo Bills Foundation Michelle Roberts. "By training thousands of members of our community at large-scale trainings, providing CPR training at nonprofits, providing training to visitors at training camp, and with the donation of CPR in youth sports kits to local youth sports organization over the next five years, we hope to save lives and improve the

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survival rates of cardiac arrest in our community."

The first community empowerment event will be held at Highmark Stadium on Saturday, June 3, during National CPR & AED Awareness Week, held annually June 1-7. Participants can register ahead of time online at www.heart.org/BuffaloBillsCPR for a time to learn Hands-Only CPR, then enjoy family activities on the field. A similar event will be held at Johnnie B Wiley Amateur Athletic Sports Pavilion on June 10. These activities are supported by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of WNY. Trainings are also planned for the American Heart Association's CycleNation event in the fall.

For more information on Hands-Only CPR, visit cpr.heart.org.

Wegmans, American Heart Association team to save lives through CPR

With nearly 3 out of 4 cardiac arrests outside of the hospital occurring in homes, knowing how to perform CPR is critically important. CPR, especially if performed immediately, could double or triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival.

That is why the American Heart Association, the worldwide leader in resuscitation science and education, and Wegmans are adding lifesavers to the chain of survival by providing Hands-Only CPR education resources in the community. Quick, simple and easy-to-learn, Hands-Only CPR has been shown to be as effective in the first few minutes as conventional CPR for cardiac arrest at home, at work or in public.

"For years, we have sponsored hundreds of youth sports programs because of the important role they play in providing positive activities for kids, while also promoting social and personal development, physical and mental health, and their ability to bring communities together," said Deana Percassi, Wegmans vice president of community engagement and communications. "Through this collaboration, we're expanding the support we give to these organizations, not only helping to ensure youth sports remain accessible in our communities, but also providing the knowledge and training to help keep our young

athletes safe."

The American Heart Association and Wegmans will focus on CPR education for youth sports organizations. As a part of the collaboration, 300 CPR & First Aid in Youth Sports training kits will be placed throughout New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina and Washington, D.C. These training kits are designed for youth coaches to ensure they and their community know the lifesaving skills of CPR, how to use an AED, and how to help during sports-related emergencies. Each kit can train approximately 300 people per year.

"Unfortunately, too many sudden cardiac arrest victims, including young athletes, don't get the help they need," said Jason Stulb, executive director of the American Heart Association, Rochester. "Knowing how to respond in a cardiac emergency when seconds matter is literally the difference between life and death. Thanks to support from Wegmans, we will be able to help thousands of people involved with youth organizations respond in those crucial first moments after cardiac arrest."

CPR & First Aid in Youth Sports training kits will be distributed in every community with a Wegmans store. Recipient organizations will be contacted by an American Heart Association or Wegmans representative.

For more information on this program, visit heart.org/WegmansCPR, or visit cpr.heart.org for more on Hands-Only CPR.

About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities. Through collaboration with numerous organizations, and powered by millions of volunteers, we fund innovative research, advocate for the public's health and share lifesaving resources. The Dallas-based organization has been a leading source of health information for nearly a century. Connect with us on heart.org, Facebook and Twitter, or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.



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