Bluffton Area
Public Access Defibrillator (PAD)
Program

A Joint Project of
The Bluffton Township Fire District
and
The Arrhythmia Alliance US

December 16, 2015
Background

Bluffton Township Fire District

The Bluffton Township Fire District (BTFD) is a progressive and proactive full service fire and rescue organization in Beaufort County, South Carolina. The BTFD is comprised of eight (8) strategically located fire/rescue stations and employs 130 dedicated professional staff members. The BTFD provides service to approximately 246 square miles of southern Beaufort County. The department is in its second year of its current Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is the District’s guiding document for fiscal years 2015 – 2019 and is designed to assist the BTFD in continuing to provide high quality and efficient services to the public at an affordable cost. One of the provisions in the plan is to develop a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) strategy and implement solutions to make the entire Bluffton community ‘Heartsafe’ and reduce the number of sudden cardiac deaths by training all in CPR and the placement and familiarization of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs).

Probably one of the most important aspects of the CRR is to reduce the incidence of death and debilitating injury from the occurrence of sudden cardiac death. As the CRR is being developed it is evident that cardiac related emergencies are a substantial problem within the Bluffton Fire District. This is not uncommon as these types of emergencies occur daily across our country. Therefore, the BTFD has as one of its Strategic Planning Goals to work to increase the survival rate for those persons in our community who may suffer a sudden cardiac death. This paper documents what the BTFD is identifying as its Public Access Automated External Defibrillator (PAD) Program. The program attacks the problem two ways; (1) by increasing public awareness, training, and education about sudden cardiac death, and (2) by providing the equipment and resources to involve the community in early treatment interventions should an event occur. An AED is the only way to restore the heart to sinus rhythm and save a life. BTFD will be working in partnership with a local non-profit, Arrhythmia Alliance-US to educate, inform and ultimately, save lives.

Arrhythmia Alliance US

Arrhythmia Alliance is an international heart rhythm non-profit whose US branch is local to the BFTD. Together with their international organizations they run the Defibs Save Lives campaign which aims to place public access defibrillators in communities along with providing CPR training and AED familiarization. The use of an AED, together with CPR, is the only way to save the life of someone in sudden cardiac arrest. A-A US has many partners in this campaign; community groups, industry members and medical professionals, all working together to reduce the number of lives lost to sudden cardiac death.

Objectives to Increase Public Awareness, Training, and Education Related to Sudden Cardiac Death in Our Community

Objective 1.1 – Continue to broaden the number and scope of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) classes to the public. In doing so, make sure the AED component of the training is reinforced with information from the PAD to include:

- Understanding of the AED registry created within the PAD.
- Understanding that the public can use an AED without fear of liability.
- Understanding of the use of smart phones and applications to provide access to the AED (Dispatch and applications such as PulsePoint).
- Implement the A-A Us “Be the Difference” training and advertising campaign.

**Objective 1.2** – Increase advertisement of the PAD program in the public. Utilize all available outlets such as:

- BTFD vehicles (A-A US to feature on stickers and decals and we could provide them for our supporters)
- Print, radio, and social media (A-A US to promote on its websites and all social media, e.g. Facebook and Twitter)
- Public event sponsorships (local sporting events, restaurants, road signs, etc.) hosted together
- Speak at property and home owners association meetings about the program.
- Engage and involve local politicians and dignitaries
- Create partnerships with local business, community groups, and the Chamber of Commerce.
- Sponsor, attend, and participate in local health fairs for the community – work with A-A US for resources and share stand space
- Engage the public schools through the BTFD’s Public Education programs – engage with schoolchildren of all ages using A-A US pediatric resources, as well as engaging with sports teams and clubs as high risk groups
- Involve the Beaufort County Fire Chief’s Association’s Safety Education Team (SET)
- Use the County access network (County Channel) to broadcast advertisements and class offerings – to include free pulse check and awareness events, and CPR and AED training
- Engage the local hospitals and medical clinics for support and resources.
- Create partnerships with organizations that have expertise in the development and administration of similar programs for assistance and direction – A-A US has a wealth of case studies from its partner organizations, including a comprehensive report and manifesto on why public access defibrillators are so important

**Objectives to Increase Public Access to AED Equipment within Our Community**

**Objective 2.1** – Provide AED’s in all public places

- All Town and buildings and facilities.
- All Fire District buildings and facilities.
- All Town vehicles.
- All Fire District vehicles.
- All Town parks, sports, and recreational areas.
- All festival and large gathering places within the Town.
- Any identified trend areas
- All bike paths, jogging, and walking trails.
- All golf courses.
- Private businesses willing to participate.
- Schools, nurseries and colleges.
- Libraries and community groups and buildings.
In placing the AED, ensure that it is done with publicity, awareness and education. Everyone in the community needs to be aware of the AED; where it is, how to access it and how to use one alongside CPR. AEDs must also be maintained and there should be checks in place to ensure this.

**Objective 2.2** – Implement the A-A US AED registry within the area protected by the Fire District.
- Utilize the A-A US AED registration program and database for all AED’s in the District whether public or private.
- Assign an internal data-entry person to input data as needed into the A-A US AED registry database.
- Consider the implementation of an AED registration ordinance.

**Objective 2.3** – Develop a maintenance and update program for all equipment purchased and owned by the Town of Bluffton and the Fire District.
- Consider an annual maintenance contract for all Town and District owned equipment.
- Provide monthly, quarterly, and annual inspections and maintenance for all equipment.
- Develop a system to provide for the replacement of items that may expire or be used in the event of an AED use.
- Ensure individuals are aware of their responsibility for maintaining the AED and that checking it for battery life, etc. becomes part of a regular routine/

**Objective 2.4** – Provide for the funding of needed AEDs, training, equipment and supplies to support the program
- Create partnerships with organizations that have expertise in the development and administration of similar programs for assistance in equipment acquisition and funding.
- Pursue grant funding where available and look at national and local funders that would cover part of the project, as well as a whole project.
- Prepare an overall budget for the program and present to the local governments for assistance in funding.
- Create a community wide funding campaign.

**Objective 2.5** – Ensure there is awareness and public education in the community and surrounding areas
- Work with the Arrhythmia Alliance – US to hold public awareness events in the area at appropriate times, e.g. during organized events on Hilton Head Island and in Bluffton (Bluffton Farmer’s Market, Bluffton Peanut Festival, HHI Wing Festival, etc.)
- Make contact with local press and media to ensure there is public awareness in the local area about the campaign and what it will mean to local residents (Island Packet, Bluffton Sun, etc.)
- Search for appropriate key opinion leaders and/or celebrities in the area to become the face of the campaign or patron. Arrhythmia Alliance has had success with high-profile golf and soccer players promoting the campaign.