NOW IS THE TIME…
for action to save lives

Arrhythmia Alliance
Manifesto
June 2015

Why?
“Today across the UK, up to 250 people will be struck down by sudden cardiac arrest and less than 20 will survive – in many other places across the world MORE THAN 100 of these people would survive and continue to live their lives.”

Trudie Lobban MBE
Founder & Trustee
Arrhythmia Alliance

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Patrons: 
W B Beaumont, OBE
Rt. Hon Tony Blair
HM King Constantine of Greece
Prof Silvia G Priori
Prof Hein JJ Wellens

Ambassadors: Bernard & Lesley Gallacher, Sir Roger Moore,
Fabrice & Shauna Muamba

About Arrhythmia Alliance
Arrhythmia Alliance (A-A), The Heart Rhythm Charity® is working to improve the diagnosis, treatment and quality of life for all those affected by arrhythmias.

A-A is a coalition of charities, patient groups, patients, carers, medical groups and allied professionals representing thousands of individual members. Although these groups remain independent, they work together under the A-A umbrella to promote timely and effective diagnosis and treatment of arrhythmias. This unique coalition provides an integral information and support network for those affected by arrhythmias and it is a springboard for medical discussion and health service improvement.

Driving policy on arrhythmias
A-A was launched in 2004 at the start of the first Arrhythmia Awareness Week in Westminster to raise awareness and highlight the deficiencies in the treatment and care of arrhythmia sufferers. A-A established a respected relationship with the government, resulting in a significant and vital change within government policy.

The charity was fundamental in pushing through one of the most essential policy issues to affect cardiology and cardiac patients, resulting in the inclusion of Chapter 8 on Arrhythmias and Sudden Cardiac Death in the National Service Framework (NSF). Before lobbying began, the word ‘arrhythmia’ was mentioned only once in the NSF for Coronary Heart Disease; there were no guidelines dictating diagnosis, treatment or care for those with heart rhythm disorders relating to the ‘electric’ nature of the heart.

Raising awareness of arrhythmias
A-A runs awareness events throughout the year, culminating in an annual World Heart Rhythm Week and Arrhythmia Awareness Week held every June which encourages old and new supporters to promote awareness of cardiac arrhythmias. During Heart Rhythm Week 2015, A-A is focusing on Detect, Protect, Correct.

Detect, Protect, Correct
More than 2m people in the UK have a heart rhythm disorder – an arrhythmia - and as a core part of its work A-A looks to secure early diagnosis and improve outcomes for these individuals.

Through its ‘Know Your Pulse’ campaign A-A has been instrumental in the recent decision by NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence), in their clinical guideline on health checks that recommends practitioners perform a pulse rhythm check prior to taking blood pressure to detect any pulse irregularities. Individuals who are found to have an irregular pulse rhythm should be referred to the GP for further investigation.

Defibs Save Lives!
A-A works to support the placement of public access defibrillators (AEDs) and has set up specific campaigns to help increase the numbers of these life-saving devices in local communities.

Campaigns such as Hearts and Goals, supported by SCA survivor Fabrice Muamba, and the A-A Bernard Gallacher Defib Campaign, spearheaded by Bernard Gallacher, and supported by the PGA (Professional Golfers Association) raise awareness of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) and the important role CPR together with access to, and prompt use of, an AED can make in saving lives.

Together with local community and schools initiatives, over 750 AEDs have been placed by A-A since 2013. But more, much more, still needs to be done!

For more information
www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk
or www.defibssavelives.org

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The Problem
Every six minutes someone in the UK is struck down by sudden cardiac arrest. However, only one person in every hour will survive, yet in many other parts of the world five people an hour survive – why is this happening?

What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?
Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is a condition in which the heart stops beating suddenly and unexpectedly due to a malfunction in the heart’s electrical system. The malfunction that causes SCA is a life-threatening abnormal heart rhythm; an arrhythmia. The most common arrhythmia is ventricular fibrillation (VF). When in VF, the heart’s rhythm is so chaotic (called “fibrillating”) that the heart merely quivers, and is unable to pump blood to the body and brain. Once a heart has entered VF, a sudden cardiac arrest may occur.

During SCA a victim first loses his or her pulse, then consciousness and finally the ability to breathe. Unlike a heart attack the victim loses consciousness instantly.

The Solution
Arrhythmia Alliance believes... 

Now is the Time to stop talking and take ACTION. We need to ensure the Chain of Survival is strong and used in the UK. We know what needs to be done to ensure at least 50% of those people with a shockable rhythm who suffer a SCA survive and continue to live their lives.

Our Vision
• Everyone (with a shockable heart rhythm) survives a sudden cardiac arrest.

Our Aim
• By 2020, 50% of sudden cardiac arrest victims in the UK, with a shockable heart rhythm, will return home alive and neurologically intact.

Time and the Chain of Survival

The survival chances of a person in SCA decreases by 10% for every minute untreated. Survival from SCA without immediate CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and prompt defibrillation is less than 5%. Administration of high quality CPR can increase survival to 25%, but when combined with timely defibrillation, survival from SCA with a shockable rhythm, can reach in excess of 50%.

Time is the most critical factor in determining if someone will survive SCA:
• Time for someone to start CPR
• Time for defibrillation to be administered by use of an automated external defibrillator (AED)
• Time to ROSC (return of a pulse and spontaneous circulation) and rapid administration of advanced life saving skills
• Time to get the resuscitated victim to an appropriate cardiac centre for treatment

All of these elements form part of the ‘Chain of Survival’ which a person must be taken through successfully in order to survive SCA and leave hospital alive and neurologically intact.

Effective implementation of each step of the ‘Chain of Survival’ has been proven to dramatically increase survival from SCA.

Our Seven Task Asks:
Arrhythmia Alliance (A-A) has identified seven critical aspects of the Chain of Survival that when improved and embedded into practice will dramatically increase the number of lives saved from SCA.

1. Increase bystander action
A-A will launch a public ACTION campaign at Heart Rhythm Congress 2013:
‘Now is the Time... for you to save a life’.
Working in partnership with other stakeholder groups A-A will convert existing awareness into action by building on and integrating all existing awareness and educational initiatives into a focused umbrella media campaign that will engage the public to act.

2. Increase the number of first responders & co-responders
Engage the existing network of Olympics and Commonwealth Games volunteers to increase the number of first responders. Identify other groups where volunteering is a major part of their remit, for example Scouts, Girl Guides, RVS and build CPR training and AED familiarisation into their work. Emergency services to work together and Fire and Rescue Services of Great Britain to build on good practice and become emergency co-responders service.

3. Ensure directive action by emergency service operators is mandatory
All emergency service operators/dispatchers to be trained:
• To use simple questions with caller to confirm a potential diagnosis of SCA
• To direct bystander ‘hands-only’ CPR
• To locate and direct immediate access to nearest AED
• To dispatch nearest emergency service: first responder, co-responder (fire service), RRT

4. Improve quality of bystander ‘hands-only’ CPR
Building on the success of other countries, ensure co-ordinated CPR training and AED familiarisation courses for schools and colleges are included in educational curricula as part of PHSE and good citizenship programs. Target additional training and familiarisation programmes towards young people (17-24 year olds) through inclusion of CPR training and AED familiarisation as part of learner driver scheme.

5. Efficient mapping and placement of AEDs
A-A will build on the existing AED Locator national database in partnership with the UK’s ambulance services to create an efficient AED mapping process and work with new technology partners to make this a reality (e.g. Android companies engaging with the NHS) request and require that ALL those raising funds for, and placing, AEDs log their details with the national database.

A-A will work with the AED manufacturers and distributors to ensure all details of purchased AEDs are submitted to the national database so that these can be cross-referenced, tracked and logged; and ensure tracking and mapping devices are built into their latest AEDs and cabinets.

Identification of existing AEDs through an efficient mapping process will provide a baseline from which a ‘National AED placement strategy’ will be created and implemented.

6. Embed an integrated management approach to the enhanced Chain of Survival
A-A will co-ordinate all existing efforts from across the UK to ensure an enhanced, integrated Chain of Survival.

All stakeholders - charities, ambulance & emergency services, AED manufacturers, public health, healthcare professionals and policy makers - to become part of an Alliance for Action to ensure that the enhanced chain of survival is embedded across the UK.

7. Raise standards of practice through audit and evaluation of every event
All SCA events will be recorded to determine what happened, what went well, what went wrong, what can be learnt and what needs improvement. This will become our audit and evaluation tool through which a national Sudden Cardiac Arrest registry can be created.

If we start with the premise that everyone with a shockable heart rhythm survives; when sadly someone does not, then we must ask why to prevent the same mistakes or to make improvements in CARE to save lives.

Commitment: To ensure the long-term survival of resuscitated SCA patients

The seven tasks focus on the first few critical minutes that will determine a victim’s chances of survival. However, there is also a significant need to ensure the long-term survival of those SCA patients who are resuscitated so that they can return home alive and neurologically intact. Arrhythmia Alliance proposes working with its medical advisory board and relevant healthcare professional groups to review and develop guidance for high-quality post-resuscitation care, together with an audit and evaluation process, so that patient survival is not in vain.

‘Now is the Time... for you to save a life ...’