

## Take Heart Australia



### Heartsafe Communities

Approximately thirty thousand Australians have a sudden cardiac arrest each year, and about 90% of them die. Deaths from cardiac arrest are three times more common than deaths from major trauma, almost four times more common than deaths from stroke, and equivalent to three quarters of all deaths from cancer. Four Australians under the age of 35 die of cardiac arrest each week!

#### **90% of Australians who suffer cardiac arrest do not survive**

How can we change this?

In Seattle up to 64% of cardiac arrest victims live, due to innovative schemes to promote change and improvement in the way they respond, as a community, to cardiac arrest. The whole approach to cardiac arrest in our communities, and saving the lives of our fellow Australians, is captured in the Chain of Survival.

### The Chain of Survival

In every link of the Chain of Survival, including recognition of cardiac arrest, increasing the proportion of the population trained in High-Quality CPR, expanding the coverage and distribution of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), and generally involving the community in the immediate response to these devastating emergencies. Everywhere in the world, each time a similar scheme has been implemented, more and more people survive.



Seattle Professor Mickey Eisenberg, one of the gurus of cardiac arrest survival says “We believe the most important ingredient is a team effort with a shared vision. The vision can be as simple as Improving survival from out of hospital cardiac arrest.” One of the most exciting implementations of Professor Eisenberg’s principles is the Heartsafe Communities program.

## Heartsafe Communities

Heartsafe Communities is a program designed to promote survival from sudden out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, and is a general concept focused upon strengthening the “chain of survival”; it recognises and stimulates efforts by individual communities to improve their system for preventing cardiac arrest from becoming irreversible death.

The first Heartsafe program began in Massachusetts in 2002; programs now exist in all or parts of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia, as well as Ireland, New Zealand, and Taiwan, and are now being developed across Australia by Take Heart Australia.

In the basic Heartsafe model, a community, which may be a geographical region or an organisation, establishes a set of minimum criteria that must be met in order to achieve Heartsafe status. These are goals that support the chain of survival, such as widespread HQ-CPR instruction, public access defibrillators, and aggressive resuscitation protocols for first responders and ambulance services. Individual communities can become designated as a Heartsafe Community, with street signs proclaiming this status posted at the edge of town, and substantial media coverage as a result.

## Heartsafe Communities Australia

Take Heart Australia is working with pilot organisations and geographical communities to design and implement the Heartsafe Communities program and infrastructure which can be replicated across our country.



Australian Heartsafe Communities recognise that we not only have communities based on geography, such as neighbourhoods, towns and suburbs, as well as communities based on organisations such as our workplace, but that we also form communities based on shared values, pastimes and interests. All of these may evolve into a community which cares enough for its members to ensure that they are always safe if the worst happens.



Heartsafe Communities activities will include cardiac arrest awareness materials and related media, a blended learning HQ-CPR training program using streamed video and face-to-face skills training, branded Laerdal MiniAnne inflatable mannequins, and teaching and advice on Automated External Defibrillator use and placement.



Activity in each link in the Chain of Survival, taking part in these activities and utilising these resources will result in the award of Heartbeats, which will be used to attain Heartsafe Community status.





Take Heart Australia are also working with their pro-bono collaborative partners such as Hill + Knowlton Communications, Channel 9 and OnQue Digital to ensure comprehensive traditional and social media coverage for all communities involved.