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British Heart Foundation – Community Training

Introducing the Call Push Rescue School Program in the United Kingdom

BRIEF BACKGROUND

As 80% of cardiac arrests occur in or around the home, it is likely a family member, friend or neighbor — who may not have knowledge of CPR — will be required to intervene. But in the UK, the survival rate from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) is only 1 in 10. Evidence from Europe and parts of the United States shows that survival rates can improve to 1 in 4 when implementing a strategy to ensure more people know CPR. Evidence has also shown that giving all children the chance to learn CPR skills at school can help save more lives.

STEPS TAKEN

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) launched the Call Push Rescue (CPR) program in 2014 as part of the wider “Every Child a Lifesaver” campaign to accomplish its goal of creating a nation of lifesavers. Designed for secondary schools in the UK, the goal was to ensure that all school children over the age of 11 had the opportunity to learn CPR and automated external defibrillator (AED) awareness skills.

Eligible schools received the Call Push Rescue training program at no cost, including a unique self-directed learning kit that can be used by teachers. By watching the DVD and practicing on reusable training manikins, participants learned how to recognize a cardiac arrest, call the emergency number 999, begin chest compressions and give rescue breaths, as well as how to use an AED with voice prompts. Any teacher could deliver the course in just 45 minutes, compared to other longer programs with an external certified trainer, which provided schools with more flexibility.

CHALLENGES

To further improve bystander rates, teachers needed confidence in their ability to teach the Call Push Rescue program to their students. In the longer term, there was no way to track if or how students maintained these life-saving skills once they left school.

RESULTS

More than 88% of schools in the UK now have Call Push Rescue training kits, which have been awarded accreditation by a recognized teaching organization in England. Since 2014, an estimated 2.7 million pupils have trained through the innovative program. And in 2019, after years of lobbying, the English Government announced that first aid, including CPR, would be added as a compulsory aspect of the secondary school curriculum. The free training kits likely influenced the decision, eliminating the cost barrier. Thirty-two local authorities in Scotland have signed up to support CPR being taught in schools. The BHF continues to work with colleagues in Northern Ireland and Wales to influence them to adopt a similar policy.

Across the UK, there has been an increase in bystander CPR rates from 57.9% in 2014, to 67.4% in 2017, and an increase in use of a defibrillator by a member of the public at an OHCA from 2.3% in 2014 to 4.8% in 2017. The BHF schools training campaign contributed to this increase, along with several other initiatives that have provided training to the wider population.

OUTLOOK

The BHF is developing and piloting a workplace CPR training initiative using the innovative Call Push Rescue kits and a “train the trainer” model to ensure more people learn CPR across the UK.

CONTACT

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