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Overcoming Challenges in a Rural Setting

Montana equips law enforcement with CPR training and AEDs



THE CHALLENGE:

A rural state, Montana is the 4th largest in size, but is scarce people, ranking 44th in total population, with just over 1 million residents. As a result, Montana faces substantial challenges to achieve timely access to pre-hospital and hospital care involved in sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) resuscitation.

THE RESPONSE:

Montana recognized its low population density creates practical challenges to providing timely emergent care. To combat this hurdle, Montana launched a program to train its law enforcement officers in CPR, while also equipping them with automated external defibrillators (AED). Due to the nature of their work, police officers can often respond to residents suffering SCA more quickly than EMTs.

The program has saved multiple lives across Montana. The first person saved through the initiative was a semi-truck driver whose truck caught on fire. When highway patrol troopers arrived on scene, bystanders alerted them to the driver's condition. They pulled the driver from the vehicle and immediately began administering CPR. For the next 20 minutes, the officers performed resuscitation techniques, continuing CPR as well as delivering several AED shocks. Thanks to the officers, the driver's heart began independently beating again as EMS personnel arrived. The patient was fully communicating with paramedics by the time the ambulance arrived at the hospital a half hour later.

More recently, a teenager collapsed on the field during soccer practice. Coaches started CPR and called 911. A local police officer driving past the field was notified of the emergency dispatch. In a matter of moments, the officer was at the athlete's side attaching their AED, analyzing the heart rhythm and delivering a lifesaving shock to the teen.

Both cardiac arrest victims have returned to full lives. Montana continues to expand and refine this public safety program of law enforcement response to save more lives from OHCA.



Montana's program is an important step to overcome the challenges of space and time that occur so often in the state.

Learn more about Montana's life-saving program [here](#).