

NEWS RELEASE



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Keeping kids safe...

The Hartford Launches Program to Give Life-Saving Defibrillators to Hartford Schools

Leading national insurer equips neighbor schools with the latest in emergency medical equipment. An important lesson in risk management, it says.

HARTFORD, Conn. – It can happen on a job site. It can happen in a high rise. It can happen on a school playing field. It's called Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA), and without fast defibrillation – a pulse of electric current applied to the heart with an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) – it can kill. News reports are filled with success stories, when lives were saved using the devices; as well as tragedies, when help wasn't able to get there in time.

The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: HIG), whose own Loss Control department has for years worked with its business policyholders to implement AED programs at their facilities, today took the added step of equipping three of its Hartford neighbor schools with AEDs -- the latest chapter in the company's longtime involvement with local education issues.

“Sudden cardiac arrest can strike anyone at any time without warning. When its victim is a child or young adult, the loss can be particularly devastating to an entire community,” said Lynda Godkin, The Hartford's senior vice president of State and Community Relations. “Numerous studies have shown that improving access to AEDs can increase survival rates significantly. We believe that equipping each of our partner schools with AEDs is a vital step in ensuring the safety and well-being of both students and adults.”

“Securing additional AEDs for each of our schools is an important benefit to the Hartford School District,” said Hartford Public Schools Superintendent Robert Henry. “We're grateful to The Hartford for donating these much-needed devices to West Middle Elementary, Quirk Middle and Hartford Public High.”

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As part of The Hartford's donation, Hartford Public High will receive 12 units and Quirk Middle and West Middle Elementary schools will each receive two.

The Hartford's donation of AEDs supports a movement across the country to increase the availability of defibrillators in schools – strategically placing them within easy reach of coaches, teachers, school nurses, administrators and support staff who are trained to use them.

“Schools are particularly important locations for AEDs because, in addition to being places where our children spend much of their time, schools also serve as community centers, hosting meetings, evening classes and other events for people of all ages,” said Alan Relyea, a loss control expert with The Hartford and former paramedic instructor with one of the first advanced life support programs in the nation.

The Hartford's support of AEDs stemmed from a customer inquiry several years ago. “One of our business customers asked whether we thought AEDs were a good risk management idea,” said Relyea. “Based on our research of the devices, we determined that not only was it a good idea for our customer to implement an AED program at its workplace, but it made sense for The Hartford to equip its own offices as well.” The Hartford has since placed AEDs in each of its offices across the country and continues to help customers implement AED programs at their places of business. Customers of The Hartford are eligible for significant savings on the cost of AED hardware and associated services through an alliance with a major AED manufacturer.

The American Heart Association estimates that 250,000 Americans die from sudden cardiac arrest each year. Currently, only 5 to 8 percent of SCA victims survive, due to delayed access to defibrillation. Numerous studies have shown that early defibrillation can increase survival rates significantly – to as high as 74 percent if defibrillation is conducted within three to five minutes.

“The benefits of public access defibrillation are clear: The more AEDs that are available at places where people gather, the greater the likelihood that a trained person will be at the right place at the right time and with the right equipment to save a life,” said Relyea.

The Hartford is one of the nation's largest financial services and insurance companies, with 2004 revenues of \$22.7 billion. The company is a leading provider of investment products, life insurance and group benefits; automobile and homeowners products; and business property-casualty insurance. The Hartford's Internet address is www.thehartford.com.

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