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Outsmart a killer

Cardiovascular diseases are the nation's No. 1 killers, with nearly a million lives lost annually. One event — cardiac arrest — claims 250,000 lives annually, usually within one hour of symptoms and before its victims ever reach the hospital. Chances are some of your golfers have some type of cardiovascular disease. Is your golf facility prepared should one of your golfers suffer a cardiac arrest on your course?

The American Heart Association is committed to increasing the survival rate from cardiovascular diseases through a number of initiatives, including the GCSAA-supported Links for Life, a joint program with *Golf Digest* designed to help prevent death on golf courses from cardiac emergencies. The top public locations where cardiac arrest occurs include golf courses, airports, shopping malls and sports stadiums.

When a person suffers cardiac arrest, they suddenly lose consciousness, stop breathing and lose their pulse. In most cardiac arrest victims, the heart goes into an uncontrolled quiver, called ventricular fibrillation, and cannot effectively pump blood through the body. Defibrillation, or electric heart shock, is the recommended treatment for ventricular fibrillation. Every minute that cardiac arrest victims go without defibrillation decreases their chances of survival about 10 percent. A variety of factors cause cardiac arrest, but when it occurs, survival depends on successful and timely defibrillation.

Links for Life encourages the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) by making them accessible to those suffering cardiac arrest. Unlike their larger predecessors on television medical dramas, new AEDs are smaller, with highly automated functionality. New computer chip technology enables AEDs to accurately measure and analyze the heart rhythm and make an appropriate recommendation about

whether to administer a shock. AEDs are about the size of a laptop computer and are battery-powered, making them compact, transportable and convenient for trained lay rescuers to use.

We encourage you to participate in Links for Life, so you'll be ready if one of your golfers suffers a cardiac arrest.

Tips for implementing Links for Life at your club:

The American Heart Association recommends that AEDs be placed as part of a comprehensive program including medical oversight, CPR and AED training, properly maintained equipment and integration with your local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system. Your program should also include a communications system that allows immediate notification of both 911 and the emergency response team on your course. Trained rescuers should be available whenever golfers are on the course, and a vehicle ready at all times for fast transportation to the site of the emergency.

Before implementing a program on your course, consult with your local medical EMS personnel to get their input and to help you integrate your program with their system.

Encourage your members to learn CPR. CPR pumps blood through the body, temporarily circulating oxygen to vital organs like the lungs, heart and brain. This buys a few minutes until you can use a defibrillator to shock the heart. The combination of early notification of EMS, bystander CPR, early defibrillation and early advanced care by EMS is proven to help save lives from cardiac arrest.

For more information about the *Golf Digest*/American Heart Association Links for Life program, call the Links for Life hotline at (800) 438-0489 or the American Heart Association at (800) AHA-USA1.

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Lynn A. Smaha is the president of the American Heart Association.

Coming next month



April

- Conference and show coverage
- Night aerifying
- Kids on the course