

CPR training offered to just over half of surveyed ON high school students despite mandated training

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Just over half of surveyed Ontario high schools reported providing CPR and AED training to students despite being mandated by the province to provide training for the lifesaving technique, according to a new study

by Unity Health Toronto researchers.

The study, published Monday April 12, in *CJC Open*, surveyed elementary and high schools from 15 different [school](#) boards across Ontario to understand the scope of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) [training](#), which are mandated in the Ontario Grade 9 Health and Physical Education Curriculum. Researchers from St. Michael's Hospital of Unity Health Toronto worked with 120 elementary, 25 middle and 60 high schools to complete a web-based survey to understand the scope of this training.

They found that most surveyed schools have an AED installed and 60% offer CPR training to staff. But despite the government mandated curriculum, only 56% of high schools offer this lifesaving training to students. Commonly reported barriers included lack of funding, time and availability.

"Clearly legislation alone is not enough to guarantee successful implementation of this lifesaving training in schools" the authors wrote. "We need additional strategies, such as raising awareness of the mandated legislation, providing funding and easy access to relevant teaching materials".

In Canada, an estimated 35,000 sudden cardiac arrests occur each year and fewer than 10 percent survive. Previous research has found teaching students how to perform CPR and use an AED has widespread public health implications, as they will be more likely as adults to help in an emergency situation. Trained students are also effective "CPR multipliers" by teaching their friends and families. In countries where this training has been mandated and implemented in schools for a number of years, there have been marked increases in people performing CPR leading to higher survival rates.

Dr. Katherine Allan, lead author for the study said: "With effective implementation of this training in schools, there is the opportunity to save hundreds of future lives."

Provided by St. Michael's Hospital

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