

Add CPR training to curriculum: report

By Teresa Latchford

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Learning how to save a life should be compulsory in Ontario high schools, according to an emergency doctors' report.

The Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians recently released a statement focusing on bystander cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), advising you to at least try to perform CPR on someone suffering cardiac arrest even if you haven't been trained because the alternative is likely death.

Since CPR is most effective when the person administering it has been properly trained, the statement includes a recommendation that CPR training be a compulsory part of high school education.

In Ontario, the Education Ministry requires students be taught about CPR, but isn't particular about hands-on training, St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School physical education head Steve Carraetto said.

The Advanced Coronary Treatment Foundation (ACT), has been working with school boards in Ontario, Alberta and Manitoba, including the York Catholic District School Board, to provide lifesaving CPR training to more than 1.8 million high school students.

Each year, 300,000 youth are trained by more than 4,500 physical education and health teachers through the program.

The start-up resources, including teacher training and mannequins, are donated to schools. The program will soon include the use of automated external defibrillators.

There are 15 schools in the Catholic board enrolled in the program and the public board is working to get the program up and running in its high schools.

"This is better than showing them a bunch of pictures or a video because they get to do some hands-on learning with the mannequins," Mr. Carraetto said. "If they have gone over it 20 or 30 times in the classroom, they will be ready when they need it in the real world."

Before, the school would bring in a guest instructor, which would cost students \$20 to \$25 out of pocket. With the initial teacher training and cost of the mannequins covered, the life-saving instruction now isn't associated with a fee. ACT is also expected to install a defibrillator in St. Maximilian next year.

While the program was well received by students last year and is expected to be again this year when the unit is taught in December, the program isn't perfect.

Down the road, the mannequins will need maintenance, a cost that hasn't been discussed as the program is



CPR training. St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS students Andre Massoumi (from right), Nicholas DaCosta and Matthew Braun practise CPR techniques. *By Mike Barrett*

relatively new in the school. Also, students receive a certificate stating they completed the five days of instruction, but it is not considered a full certification that would be required by an employer.

"But having said that, CPR is a moral thing and these kids will have the confidence to save a life," he said.

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