

Heart Smart:

Implementing An AED Program at your Club

By THOMAS J. O'CONNOR

At the 1999 Motorola Open, a caddy experienced heart failure. While Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) can strike anyone at anytime, the recurrence of it in such visible circumstances has brought much-needed attention to the lifesaving capabilities of on-site Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) and the necessity of CPR-trained staff.

At the 2000 CMAA World Conference in Atlanta, the CMAA announced their partnership with Golf Digest and the American Heart Association in the effort to publicize the need for AEDs on the golf course. Following their lead, I began an investigation to further educate myself and my fellow members of the Ohio Valley Chapter on the role that AEDs can play at a private club. It was during that investigation that I met Jim Seder, M.D., of Heartlink Communications Inc, in Newton, MA.

An AED saved Dr. Seder after ten minutes of non-responsive ventricular fibrillation (the maximum time lapse before loss of bodily functions and brain damage occurs). Dr. Seder was revived and is able to function perfectly today solely due to the presence of AED and CPR trained professionals on that fateful day. Little did I know that this wrenching true story would fuel the impetus for a new program that would inspire incredible enthusiasm and open participation from the membership and staff of Rolling Hills Country Club.

Subsequent to my presentation to the Board of Directors at the Rolling Hills Country Club, Board President Douglas Given instructed me to proceed with the bidding process. Simultaneously, the club's legal advisor, Jeff Ahlers, instructed me to research potential club liability as well as the AED users responsibility, if any.

Researching the Liability

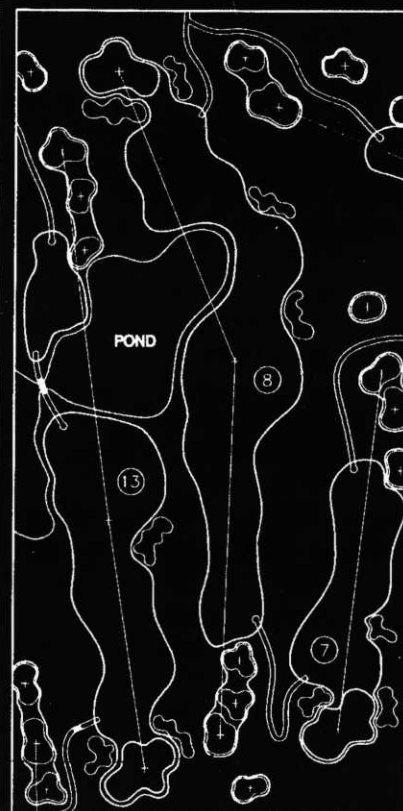
Throughout presentations and comparisons of different products, it was evident the "good Samaritan law" covered the concerns for the prospective buyer of these AED devices. Using the state of Indiana as an example, the conditions for being shielded from liability by a "good Samaritan law" are:

1) The Indiana state code (IC16-31-65-5) states "the entity in possession of an AED shall notify local ambulance service and the emergency medical services commission that it has an AED on its property. The AED representative may be able to provide you with a form letter for this purpose.

2) The person administering AED/CPR must successfully complete the American Heart Association certificate course (approximately four hours) specifically for AED/CPR. Only CPR certification will not suffice. A state-approved

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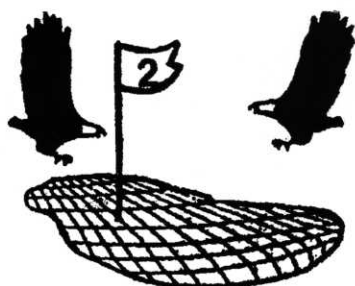
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instructor must teach the certification course.

3) Assure any instructor that the AED unit is in good working order by utilizing a weekly checklist. Manual inspection by opening and checking the battery source takes only minutes. The weekly checklist, which should be initialed and dated after each inspection, should be kept with the unit.

4) A state-licensed physician must sign off on your clubs AED program. By going with a lease program on the AED unit, the company provided one for me. I checked the doctor's certificates through a club member physician who verified that our assigned physician was duly qualified according to the state medical board.

5) If an emergency occurs, call 911 or the local EMT personnel. You must state that you are equipped with an AED at the scene.

One other issue that was raised involved members who wanted to be certified for AED but were trained in the medical profession. What was their liability as nurses or physicians to non-responsive victims to AED? I found that the Indiana state code provides that if a professional medical provider "gratuitously renders emergency care without and does not expect remuneration" then they are shielded from

liability.

After the research was completed, the Rolling Hills Country Club leased an AED, which included a response kit that provided oxygen, bandages and every imaginable compact medical necessity. The Board of Directors voted unanimously for this "little life saver" after reviewing all the benefits of having it on club property.

Linking the Life Line

We decided on a plan that encompassed the most practical locations around the golf course, pool, tennis courts, and in the clubhouse for remote "heart link" phones. Utilization of any phone that had access to the clubhouse was considered; however with the utmost of urgency in mind, we utilized the demarcation phone ports and installed red phones, with no dial or button, in all-weather protection boxes. Guests must simply pick up the handset and they are immediately connected to the clubhouse.

A recent addition of a phone station for food ordering on the #9 tee and at the pool provided easy modification to use them as "heart link" phones. Staff have been trained that calls are not only for a cheeseburger and a beer but may be a potential "heart safe emergency." The most remote extremity of our club is now only minutes from a "heart link" phone. Each "heart link phone" is identified by the

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American Heart Association and Golf Digest's universal symbol. We even created our own slogan for Rolling Hills Country Club, "your heart safe place to play."

Getting Member's Support

The next step was to develop staff and membership's preparedness for a potential emergency. I

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appeared at ladies golf association meetings petitioning them for assistance in the effort. The response was amazing.

The RHCC 2000 Readiness Task Force was established with 22 members and staff from pool, tennis, golf, clubhouse, and kitchen. Much to my surprise, the Nine Hole Ladies Association donated \$1,000 of their frugal funds to the cause.

Training

Training involved the American Red Cross local chapter who were recently certified for AED/CPR Training. In groups of eight, task force members received four hours of AED training in addition to four hours of CPR training if they were not already certified. Upon completion of training each recipient received a commemorative golf shirt with custom logo.

In reviewing the strategies of immediate response, I continued to be reminded of the urgency and precious minutes that a victim has as their survival rate begins to decrease by 10 percent with every passing minute. Strategic location of the AED became my focus.

I positioned the AED/Cardio-trauma kit inside an oak cabinet which I purchased at a local home supply center and armed the box with door contact sensors. When the door is opened, it sets off an audible alarm and immediately calls the security system operator who then contacts the EMT.

Tell The World

Two Kickoff events were held for publication and celebration of the program. The Media Kickoff was orchestrated through the Southern Indiana American Heart Association and a local advertising firm, The MAC Group, who sent out press releases. Area TV, radio, fire department, EMT response, and other related agencies attended. Secondly, the Employee Kickoff included area agencies and fire department personnel that were presented commemorative shirts.

As stated previously, we leased the AED for Rolling Hills Country Club. Many lease agreements provide benefits beyond the unit itself, and this was no exception. For \$2,500 per year, the company provides the following added features:

- + Training for the first eight team members
- + Medical emergency supplies
- + Semi-annual service

Contributions, discounted services, and support from local businesses made this effort possible. Alphagraphics owners Lisa and Tom Slade cut costs on color golf course layouts for carts and dining room tent cards. They also produced a three foot by five foot check signifying the \$1,000 contributed by the Nine Hole Ladies Association. Community Telephone purchased banners, signs, and contributed automatic dial phones with storage boxes. Special thanks to Jim Seder, M.D., whose seminar on AEDs helped start this project.

* * *

(Note from Tom O'Connor: This article and project are dedicated to Dr. Jim Seder. This is a reminder that because of a Little Heart Saver/AED, and someone who knew the simple art of CPR, everyday is a celebration of life to his children, who have their father, and a beloved wife, who has her husband.)