



COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

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Polk County Fire Rescue Makes Life-saving Tech Available via Free Mobile App

Bartow, Fla. (August 27, 2018) — On Monday, Polk County Fire Rescue made a new life-saving smartphone app available to those in the county. Through the use of GPS enabled mobile devices, the app called PulsePoint is integrated in the county's 9-1-1 system. It alerts CPR-trained bystanders in the immediate vicinity of a cardiac emergency, ensuring that they can get to the scene and start CPR in the critical minutes before EMS crews arrive. It also directs those bystanders responding to the emergency to the nearest automated external defibrillator (AED), which is yet another tool proven to be critical in surviving cardiac arrest.

The app is free to the public and can be downloaded from both the iTunes and Google Play stores.

Cardiac arrest occurs suddenly and often without warning. This is triggered by an electrical malfunction in the heart that in turn causes an irregular heartbeat. With the pumping action disrupted, the heart cannot correctly pump blood to the brain, lungs and other vital organs. Moments after this occurs the affected person loses consciousness and will have no pulse. Untreated, death of the person can occur within minutes.

"With any medical emergency every second counts, but it does even more so with a patient entering cardiac arrest," said Polk County District 5 Commissioner Bill Braswell. "At a very low cost to the county, this new mobile technology will allow those that are in cardiac arrest the chance to receive immediate care from bystanders until emergency medical services can arrive. It not only allows the patient to be located by the responding individuals, but also points them to the nearest AED location saving valuable time in the process."

The aim of PulsePoint is to severely reduce the time it takes for someone entering cardiac arrest to begin receiving care. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), effective bystander CPR, which is provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest, can double or triple a person's chance of survival, but only about one quarter of victims receive bystander CPR. The latest AHA guidelines, published in its journal (Circulation), state that community programs that use new age tech, such as mobile devices, social media and crowdsourcing, could seriously improve care delivery and patient outcomes for emergency cardiovascular conditions.

"Affecting more than 350,000 individuals per year, sudden cardiac arrest is one of the leading causes of death in the country," said Fire Chief Tony Stravino, Polk County Fire Rescue. "This initiative, spearheaded by Commissioner Braswell, provides cutting edge technology. The

PulsePoint app will provide Polk County residents the opportunity to help save a life. The mobile app can save lives by alerting people certified in CPR and who have registered on the website, in the immediately surrounding area of a cardiac arrest. These individuals can then locate the patient with the app's features and begin CPR prior to Fire Rescue's rapid arrival on scene. Every second counts when it comes to saving the life of someone who has gone into cardiac arrest. From 2013 through 2017, Polk County Fire Rescue has averaged 1,104 cardiac arrest per year and an AED was used for an average of 428 or 51 percent of those. It is evident that early CPR intervention helps save lives and we are excited to implement this technology here in Polk County".

Over a five-year period from 2013 through 2017, there have been 5,522 reported cases of cardiac arrest in Polk County, of which 4,221 (76 percent) were workable. AEDs were used to monitor 2,141 (50 percent) of these cases, and an AED "shock" was administered in 361 (17 percent) of those.

PulsePoint is a 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation based in the San Francisco Bay Area. The smartphone app is built and maintained by volunteer engineers at Workday and distributed by their marketing and implementation partner Physio-Control, Inc. CTIA Wireless Foundation is also a key sponsor and advocate of PulsePoint, providing industry and financial support. More about PulsePoint can be learned at www.pulsepoint.org or on their Facebook and Twitter pages.