



The Napanee Beaver Local News

INDEPENDENT AND LOCALLY OWNED SINCE 1870

MP maintains defibrillator donation pledge

*Scott Reid puts pay raise toward life-saving
equipment*

By Adam Prudhomme

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Local MP Scott Reid has teamed with The Advanced Coronary Treatment Foundation to make high schools across the region better prepared for a medical emergency.

Using his own money, Reid pledged \$40,000 to ensure all 10 high schools in his Lanark, Frontenac and Lennox and Addington riding are equipped with automated external defibrillators.

An AED is an easy and safe to use device that can restart a stopped heart for someone who has suffered sudden cardiac arrest. Along with the devices the money will also fund a training program for Grade 9 students as well.

"Schools are more and more like community centers," said ACT Executive Director Sandra Clarke, who stopped by NDSS Tuesday to announce the new program. "Many schools have hundreds of people walk through their halls each week."

The MP's donation will cover 70 per cent of the money needed for the equipment and training program. The Ontario government will cover the other 30 per cent. Starting next year Grade 9 Phys Ed courses will include CPR and AED training. "It's releasing a huge number into the community each year who are trained to save lives," said Clarke.

For the ACT Foundation just having the AEDs available is not enough. Everyday people need to be trained who to use them if they're to be effective. When a heart suddenly stops beating, there's often no time to wait for an EMS response.

The AEDs themselves provide voice prompts that walks a user through operating it. Once placed on someone's chest it gives a reading. As an added safety feature, if it's determined a shock isn't necessary, it won't deliver one.

The importance of an AED in public areas is easy to see. It's estimated that 35,000 to 45,000 people die annually from sudden cardiac arrest in Canada. It's not restricted to the elderly either – a 2004 StatsCan report claims 86 Canadians aged 19 or under died from cardiovascular disease.

"The health community is beginning to think it happens more often than previously thought," Clarke said of youths succumbing to a sudden attack. "The data keeping has not been good."

Clarke says Lennox and Addington is one of the first rural areas to begin equipping public areas with AEDs.

Reid says the donation was his way of giving back with money he didn't need. In 2001 MP's voted to give themselves a pay increase with the choice of opting to collect it or not. Unsure of what to do, he put the question of opting in or not to members of his riding.

"What I didn't expect was people to give me ideas," Reid said of the responses, which totalled over 3,000. "I read through them all. Some of them weren't practical but one person suggested defibrillators."

With that idea in mind he turned to the ACT Foundation to find out the best way to use the money. "I didn't need the money and (MPs) were well paid before (the pay increase)," said Reid. "This is not me being a hero."

The ACT Foundation is a charitable organization aimed at establishing CPR training in high schools across the country. Health partners behind ACT's campaign are AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis.



Adam Prudhomme - Staff

Members of the NDSS student council (from left) Wilma Kimmitt, Kurtis Otonicar and Spencer Sheffield accept AED defibrillator training equipment from Lanark, Frontenac and Lennox and Addington MP Scott Reid. The equipment was purchased courtesy a \$40,000 donation from Reid.