



**Eugene Melnyk, Sens Foundation and Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario partner with ACT Foundation and Government of Ontario in support of Ottawa ACT High School AED Program**

Events • Posted by Steve on May 28, 2010

**Summary:** The Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation announced today that more than 10,000 Ottawa high school students will be trained each year on how to use a defibrillator.

The Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation announced today that as a result of a partnership between the Government of Ontario, the Sens Foundation, Ottawa Senators owner Eugene Melnyk, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, more than 10,000 Ottawa high school students will be trained each year on how to use a defibrillator.

This initiative, which is the largest of its kind in Ontario, will ensure all 51 Ottawa high schools receive an automated external defibrillator (AED) and program training equipment. An AED is a device that can tell when a heart stops beating effectively and deliver an electric shock to help it restart.

ACT's partners have teamed up to donate \$280,000 toward the establishment of the Ottawa ACT High School AED Program, which will see all Grade 9 students trained in AED use and ensure every Ottawa high school has an AED. As a teacher-training partner, the Ottawa Paramedic Service trains high school teachers as instructors for their students. To date, 220 physical education and health teachers from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and Ottawa Catholic School Board have received this vital instruction. When the AED program setup is complete, more than 10,000 students will be trained each year in all Ottawa high schools.

"When I was just 17-years-old, my father died of a heart attack. The tragedy of that moment was that my father was a family and emergency room physician. He helped save lives on a daily basis, and yet no one could save his. Portable defibrillators did not exist back then," said Melnyk. "I learned at a very young age how precious life truly is. So when you have a chance to save lives by training 10,000 young students each and every year on how to properly use a defibrillator, you act on that chance to make a difference."

"Education and training initiatives are an important area of focus for the Sens Foundation," noted Sens Foundation president Danielle Robinson. "Supporting a school-based program that allows all Ottawa youth to graduate from high school empowered with CPR and defibrillation skills to save lives is a real win for the community."

In 2008, the Government of Ontario invested \$1.4 million as seed funding to help the ACT Foundation enhance the CPR program it was already establishing in every Ontario high school with AED training and AED units.

"I am pleased that our government has partnered with the ACT Foundation to deliver lifesaving AED training and AED units to high schools across Ottawa," said Madeleine Meilleur, MPP for Ottawa-Vanier. "I am also delighted with the community support exhibited today by Mr. Melnyk, the Sens Foundation, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. Having these devices in high schools is both a valuable learning opportunity for youth and will benefit the overall health of our community."

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, about 40,000 Canadians experience sudden cardiac arrest each year, the majority of which occur either at home or in public places.

"For every minute that passes without help, a person's chance of surviving a cardiac arrest drops by seven to 10 per cent. Defibrillation, when used in conjunction with CPR in the first few minutes, can dramatically improve cardiac arrest survival rates by more than 75 per cent," added David Sculthorpe, CEO, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. "With the help of individuals, community groups and partners like ACT and the Sens Foundation, one day AEDs will become as commonplace as fire extinguishers in Ontario, to save lives."

"Easy-to-use defibrillators are appearing in many public places," said Dr. Justin Maloney, an emergency physician and Medical Director for the ACT Foundation. "The schools already teach young people to act, to start CPR. Now we want them to grab the defibrillator on the wall and use that, too. These schools are teaching life skills that save lives."

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The Ontario Trillium Foundation, along with the Government of Ontario, is a founding provincial partner behind the CPR program and has supported the development of the Ottawa AED program. The ACT Foundation's mission is to bring the CPR and AED program to all high schools across Canada. ACT's health partners, providing the organization's sustaining funding to accomplish its goals include AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, Pfizer Canada, and sanofi-aventis.