
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
BC Ambulance Service

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE CPR SKILLS

VICTORIA – Secondary school students joined Health Minister George Abbott and Education Minister and Deputy Premier Shirley Bond at the B.C. legislature today to demonstrate the life-saving skill of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

The ministers participated in the demonstration as part of November's CPR Awareness Month to remind British Columbians of the importance of learning CPR.

"Learning how to perform CPR takes little time and could help someone you love during an emergency," said Abbott. "I am proud to see the BC Ambulance Service partner with the ACT Foundation to provide life-saving education to British Columbia's youth."

Cardiovascular disease is the second leading cause of death and accounts for more than one-fifth of all deaths in B.C. A cardiac arrest victim is four times more likely to survive if CPR is administered while waiting for further medical care.

"CPR training saves lives," said Bond. "The BC Ambulance Service is committed to working with health partners to give every Grade 9 and 10 student in this province the opportunity to learn vital CPR skills by 2010."

The BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) has been working with the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation, a national charitable organization dedicated to school-based CPR, and the Ambulance Paramedics of BC Union to provide free CPR training to secondary school students across the province.

"We see the value of CPR every day and have more and more evidence that demonstrates that good CPR works," said Dr. Jim Christenson, vice-president of medical programs for the BCAS. "Even with the best technology, medical expertise and timely deployment of first responders, the best chance for someone in cardiac arrest is still to have a bystander perform CPR until paramedics can provide professional CPR and defibrillation."

"There is no limit to how many students this program can reach," said ACT Foundation executive director Sandra Clarke. "We'll continue expanding the program across the province until all youth are equipped with the knowledge and skills to save a life as a normal part of their secondary school education."

In April 2005, the BC Ambulance Service, ACT Foundation and Ambulance Paramedics Union launched the program where paramedic instructors volunteer to train teachers to teach CPR to their students. To date, 330 teachers in 79 schools throughout the province have received the skills needed to empower and teach approximately 14,500 secondary school students CPR each year.

For more information on CPR and CPR courses, please visit the BCAS website at www.health.gov.bc.ca/bcas.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

Media contact: Steven Roberts
Communications Director
BC Ambulance Service
250 953-3165

Marisa Adair
Communications Director
Ministry of Health
250 920-8500 (cell)
250 952-1887 (media line)

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