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JELD-WEN Tradition will have portable defibrillators

By WILLIAM McCALL

PORTLAND, Ore. - When life or death depends on a few precious minutes, portable machines that can shock the heart can make the difference, whether it's at a crowded sports event or in the remote areas of the rural West. A recent study by Oregon researchers shows that automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, can double the chances of surviving a heart attack.

The last major PGA tournament on the Champions Tour this year, the Jeld-Wen Tradition, has taken the study seriously and will have four portable defibrillators stationed around the Reserve Vineyards and Golf Club in suburban Aloha for the tournament that begins Aug. 26.

Trained medical personnel are always available at Tour events to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, but the portable defibrillators are a recent addition as public awareness about the lifesaving devices grows, said Dave Senko, PGA spokesman. "Any time you have something that can potentially save a life, it's a good idea," he said.

The devices can also be used by people without any formal training because they have recorded instructions and diagrams that demonstrate how to test a heart attack victim and apply a lifesaving shock. Training in CPR is important but the study indicated the availability of defibrillating equipment and the speed of the response are the keys to improving heart attack survival rates that now hover around only 5 percent nationally, said Dr. Mohamud Daya, who led an Oregon Health & Science University study published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Even the best-trained ambulance or fire crews can do little if their response time is delayed by traffic in metro areas or crowds at events like golf tournaments or concerts, Daya said. "For our study, three of our survivors who were completely intact neurologically - meaning no brain damage - all three were from golf courses" with portable defibrillators, Daya said.

Response time also is increased by the long distances that separate many towns and emergency care providers in the rural West, making availability and portability important factors.



Daya said the study suggests that AEDs should be made available at any places where crowds or distance are a factor, especially as the population ages and more baby boomers enter the highest risk category for heart attacks. "Casinos happen to be one of the places that could benefit because older people tend to frequent casinos," Daya said. "Bingo halls are another example - any place with older people at risk."

The sophistication of the machines has increased while the size and cost have shrunk, said Gintaras Vaisnys, president of Defibtech, a portable defibrillator manufacturer in Guilford, Conn. Machines that cost about \$4,000 just a few years ago now cost about \$1,500 so that more schools, corporations and gyms can afford them, Vaisnys said.

The AEDs are also designed so they can be used quickly by the nearest people available, no matter their level of first aid experience, he said. "Somebody without training can use it effectively - that's the goal of the design," Vaisnys said. "It's a very sophisticated medical device squeezed into this user-friendly package."

The Reserve was among the nearly 1,000 sites included in the Oregon study, and the defibrillators will remain at the golf course after the tournament is over, making it the only metro area golf course with permanent AEDs, said Nancy Marshall, operations manager. Even the grounds crew will have a device in their shed in case they have to rush to the rescue. "Actually it's an easy piece of equipment to use," Marshall said. :

Oregon Health & Science University: <http://www.ohsu.edu>

Defibtech: <http://www.defibtech.com>

Reserve Vineyards and Golf Club: <http://www.reservegolf.com>