Kimball, SD Achieves Cardiac Ready Community Designation

Summary
During a cardiac emergency, every second...every minute that passes without CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) or use of an AED (automated external defibrillator) can mean the difference between life and death. In South Dakota (SD), it can take an ambulance 30 minutes to respond in the most remote areas of the state.

Kimball, SD is a rural community that lies on the I-90 Interstate between Chamberlain, SD and Mitchell, SD. Kimball does have Emergency Medical Services (EMS) but due to the volunteer make-up and rural nature, it has potential to take a while before an ambulance arrives during an emergency. The community knew they wanted to better prepare their citizens to help in an emergent cardiac event.

The Cardiac Ready Community (CRC) program helped educate and empower their community to be better prepared and more confident in helping someone experiencing a cardiac event until help arrives. Kimball residents worked together to create a safer, more knowledgeable, and better prepared community through the CRC program. Their CRC committee led the efforts to make this positive change a reality.

Challenge/Barriers
This supportive community and a great program united but not without challenges. AEDs cost approximately $2,000 and require around $200 of maintenance annually. This was a barrier for Kimball. The COVID-19 pandemic created another challenge as completing the designation activities required community involvement.

Solutions
South Dakota's hunting community is strong. So strong, in fact, they were the ones to step up to the plate. There are many hunting lodges surrounding the Kimball area that attract hunters from all over the country each year. Four of the lodges purchased AEDs and had their employees trained to use the AEDs and perform hands-only CPR. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed the CRC committee to think outside the box to meet all the requirements of the designation. The largest hurdle was communicating with the community. They leaped over this hurdle by supplying print resources to the community instead of having face-to-face interaction. They also distributed CPR basics pocket cards as well as stroke and heart attack warning sign magnets to raise awareness amongst residents.

Results
The community of Kimball has come to understand the importance of having life-saving equipment available to its residents as well as its visitors. The Cardiac Ready Community designation shed a light on the hard work that has been done to make Kimball a safer place. The Cardiac Ready Community - Kimball street signs are a constant reminder of how much this town cares about its people.
**Future Direction**

Short term goals include, continuing to: offer CPR training in the community, have the local newspaper run articles related to cardiovascular health and prevention, and offer CPR and heart attack resources at community events. Long term, Kimball would like to secure more funding to equip all the hunting lodges with AEDs as well as the other local businesses.

**Timeline**

Kimball was able to achieve CRC designation in three years. The CRC committee first met on March 15th, 2018. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic slowed the initial progress as many of the activities had to be postponed. Kimball’s committee members felt this process would have taken about two years had they not been delayed by the pandemic.

**Get Involved**

The CRC committee met monthly and was made up of nine community members representing the Kimball Ambulance, Kimball Fire Department, Kimball Clinic, Kimball City Council, Kimball School Board, and Chamber of Commerce, as well as a hunting lodge owner, local business owner, and a member of the community whose husband is a cardiac survivor.

For communities wanting to achieve the Cardiac Ready Community designation, putting together a strong team of local leaders who can work together is key. This team will work through the CRC focus areas and make the changes needed to reach the desired point value. These points are the pathway to a safer community and CRC designation.

**For more information, contact**

Liz Marso, RD, LN
Healthy Communities Coordinator
South Dakota Department of Health
Liz.Marso@state.sd.us
(605) 773-6607