

Croke Park is Ireland's First 'Heartsafe' Stadium

Dublin's Croke Park has been named the country's first 'Heartsafe' stadium in recognition of the level of care and facilities available there.



The Heartsafe Community Programme is an Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) initiative, which was launched in 2005. It aims to encourage all communities to strengthen every link in the 'chain of survival' in their community.

Cardiovascular disease is Ireland's biggest killer, with over 10,000 deaths each year. Some 5,000 of these fatalities are from sudden cardiac arrest and, as 70% of these occur out of hospital, it is imperative that communities, schools and businesses are equipped and prepared to respond. The current survival rate from an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in Ireland is as low as 1%.

The 'chain of survival' concept comprises four vital links that can save a life - early access, early cardiopulmonary resuscitation, early defibrillation and early advanced care.

GAA president, Críostóir Ó Cuana, said he was 'delighted' that Croke Park had become the first stadium in Ireland to reach this standard.

"We take our responsibilities in this area very seriously. We promote best practice in this area, not just here at Croke Park, but across all levels of the GAA and we ask all our units to be mindful of the role they can play in raising awareness of the threat of heart disease among our members and the wider public," he said.

According to IHF chief executive, Michael O'Shea, the GAA has shown 'great initiative already' by providing AEDs (automated external defibrillator) at every county training ground and by encouraging every club to purchase the instruments.



A cardiac defibrillator is a device used to administer an electric shock to a person in cardiac arrest. While once only available in hospitals, technological advances have resulted in the development of portable devices - AEDs - which can be used by people with minimal medical training.

Since 2007 the GAA has sold approximately 800 defibrillators to clubs throughout Ireland and has seen thousands of people of all ages trained in the effective use of these devices.

In addition, last January, all inter-county referees were also trained in the use of defibrillators.

"The GAA's Medical, Scientific and Welfare Committee is committed to further efforts in this area and welcomes this award to Croke Park," the association added.

<http://bit.ly/HeartsafeatCrokePark>

HeartSafety Solutions has been providing the HeartSine samaritan PAD - the official defibrillator of the GAA – to the association since 2007.