

## Lessons in Life-Saving

OSF HealthCare partners with Ottawa Township High School to improve emergency medical response

While fortunately very low, cardiac arrests in school age children do occur, many of them are outside of the athletic setting. In addition, present screening practices are unable to identify every child who may be at risk. As such, it is important to prepare school staff to handle the unplanned event. This include easy access to an AED, training to perform CPR, and to initiate the sequence of events to bring the advanced care team to the site in the shortest amount of time.

Dr. David Chan, Director of Children's Service Line for OSF HealthCare, recently presented to faculty and staff of Ottawa (Illinois) Township High School (OTHS) an evidence based approach to cardiac events and the movement to readiness vs screenings.

*"This has been a wonderful experience from my standpoint," says Dr. David Chan, Director of Children's Service Line for OSF HealthCare. "Professionally, to see a medical center, a school system, as well as the community leaders come together and say 'this is what we want to do for our community.' To help save a life when something catastrophic does happen."*

The presentation, which included a simulated cardiac code reacted to by members of the OTHS response team, is just one component of an overall emergency response plan initiated by OTHS that is reviewed and practiced annually.

OTHS Principal Patrick Leonard says it's simply another measure of serving students by providing a safe and secure learning environment.

*"We have to continue to look at ways the get better, in terms of our medical response, our emergency response for these types of situations," says Patrick Leonard, Principal of Ottawa Township High School. "And this is a good start. This training and the work in the partnership with OSF, I believe, is a good point for us to see where we need to improve and get better."*

Leonard says the ongoing training and protocols that allow staff and teachers to be in direct radio communication with emergency dispatch, plus being increasingly aware of medical situations, has already proved itself.

*"The number of visits our school nurse has had this semester. She's had over 2500 visits to her office," says Leonard. "We have contacted EMS roughly 10 to 12 times already this semester. So, when you're dealing with that number of individuals, students and staff - community members who enter the building on a daily basis - it's very important to stay on top of the correct practices and procedures that are necessary."*

Dr. Chan says this program is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when medical providers, like OSF HealthCare, and organizations, like OTHS, can come together for the greater good of a community.

*"Because we are in this together," says Dr. Chan. "It is really viewed as a way for us to extend the expertise of the medical center and its personnel to the community so that, in fact, that they are part of our medical care for the population. And the better job they do in the field, the easier our job when that patient does arrive at the hospital."*

Leonard says launching an initiative like theirs is simply a matter of establishing protocols and securing resources, like OSF HealthCare, to train employees in the proper response to medical emergencies.

Dr. Chan says expanding and deepening such collaborations can only benefit the health and wellbeing of a community.