

Elgin named Cardiac Ready Community

The community of Elgin has been designated as a Cardiac Ready Community after meeting certain criteria and applying for the designation.

Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center (JMHCC) spearheaded the effort to work with community representatives to designate Elgin as a Cardiac Ready Community through the N.D. Department of Health. Signs will be placed along Highway 21 and Highway 49 so responders, residents and people passing through know the community is a Cardiac Ready Community.

To become certified, each community must satisfy specific criteria. These standards prepare residents with the skills to respond to a cardiac event. Standards must be reached in CPR instruction, public access to AEDs, blood pressure screenings, resuscitation protocols and transport plans for EMS and the hospital.

Once a community meets the established criteria, it can apply to be designated as a North Dakota Cardiac Ready Community. A Cardiac Ready Community designation promotes survival of a cardiac event which occurs outside of the hospital setting. Cardiac Ready Communities are empowered to actively lower cardiac mortality rates.

“During a cardiac arrest, the first five minutes are critical. With the placement of AEDs, people trained in CPR and emergency responders in place, we have a community which is prepared to increase survival rates,” said JMHCC CEO Theo Stoller.

The goal is to have a community prepared to respond and assist if an individual has a cardiac arrest. To do this, it is important for individuals to be able to recognize a cardiac emergency, know how to dial 9-1-1 to access first responders immediately, begin CPR and have public access to AEDs. An AED is an automated external defibrillator, a portable electronic device which uses audio and visual commands to direct a layperson to treat a cardiac arrest through the application of the device.

In Elgin, AEDs are located at the fire hall, the community center, Our Place Cafe, Dakota Hill Housing, the hospital and at three locations at the school, including the high school, elementary school and the pool. Signs will be posted at these locations so residents know where these devices are located. Through the Cardiac Ready Community program, an AED is also now being carried in a deputy sheriff’s vehicle.

Through the program, it was determined that approximately 400 people in Grant County have become certified in CPR.

To receive the designation, JMHCC organized community stakeholders and served as the lead coordinator for the designation. Stakeholders included ambulance, fire department, city, sheriff’s department and Custer Health

representatives, as well as hospital staff. The N.D. Department of Health evaluated the community's current readiness and its plan to meet program criteria. This included access to AEDs, awareness campaigns – which will be ongoing – and CPR training.

Six communities in North Dakota have already achieved the designation: Powers Lake, Rugby, New Rockford, Valley City, Mayville and Hebron. Elgin has now joined this list.

“With all the hard work and dedication, you have made your community safer and healthier,” shared Danielle Schoch, with the N.D. Department of Health Division of Emergency Medical Services. “North Dakota Department of Health and Division of EMS congratulate and wish your community continued success and wellness.”

Following Elgin's designation, JMHCC will now work with New Leipzig and Carson to achieve the same designation, so that all of Grant County is prepared for cardiac events.

The Cardiac Ready Communities project is a partnership of the N.D. Department of Health's Division of Emergency Medical Systems and the American Heart Association through the North Dakota Cardiac System of Care. The designation is valid for three years, at which time the community will need to renew the designation.