

# Building Heart-Safe Communities: Golisano Children's Hospital and Project ADAM

## **Building a community prepared to save lives through Golisano Children's Hospital and Project ADAM**

Each year in the United States, over 350,000 adults and children fall victim to sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). Historically, people who experience SCA have a high mortality. Early cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), access to an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and a practiced emergency response plan can dramatically improve the odds of survival for a victim of SCA.

With as much as 20% the population of the United States present in a school on a given day, preparedness to manage SCA in the school setting is vitally important. New York state law requires schools (Louis's Law, 2002) and youth sports programs (Public Health Law, 2024) to have AED access and a cardiac emergency response plan (Desha's Law, 2025).

### **Legislation meets action**

Legislative changes set standards for schools and youth sports programs, but do not provide a framework for schools to develop, evaluate, and maintain cardiac emergency preparedness programs. Currently schools need support and expertise from medical providers and health systems to develop and implement cardiac emergency response plans (CERP). Once established CERPs are in place, schools will need ongoing system tests, simulation and training.

### **A partnership that supports the community**

Golisano Children's Hospital, as the premiere children's hospital in Western New York, supporting children and families throughout the greater Upstate region, is the obvious community partner and resource for schools and youth sports programs required to develop and sustain CERPs.

**Collaborative planning-** Utilizing resources developed by the nationally recognized organization, Project ADAM, Golisano Children's Hospital and local schools and youth sports programs will partner to develop organization specific emergency response plans and complete a 14-point plan to achieve a Heart Safe designation.

**Paper to action** – A great plan requires great execution to be a great solution. GCH and local schools and organizations will partner to test CERP at each location. Critical assessment of the plan, in the context of the system, will ensure the children and families in each community will benefit from what is set out on paper.

**More than "set it and forget it"**- Although sudden cardiac arrest events are relatively common, most individuals in our local schools will never be involved in an event. To truly be prepared, schools and sports organizations must be vigilant. GCH and local organizations will work together to develop and enact a training plan that supports ongoing readiness to manage these events.

## **Our Children's Hospital leads the way**

Building relationships and strong partnerships with our local schools and teams through Project ADAM will lead to further connections between GCH and our community, building trust and opening avenues for future collaborations. These inroads will literally pave the way for our GCH vehicles, our ambulances and our mobile clinic, to provide outreach and educational programs that will increase access to care and ensure pediatric resources reach all the school and youth systems across the region we serve.

## **A program for the future**

GCH partnership with Project ADAM will follow a "teach the teacher" model to ensure sustainability. New York state law will mandate ongoing adherence to the passed legislation by our schools, with ongoing surveillance that emergency response plans remain in place, with documentation of compliance and competencies to ensure success far into the future.

## **A life, a family, a community saved**

Project ADAM, and similar programs, have saved hundreds of lives through education, training, and emergency response preparedness. In the Rochester community there are dozens of children who suffer cardiac arrest outside of the hospital setting each year. A handful of these events occur at school and youth sporting events. The work of the GCH Project ADAM and local organizations will save the life of a child, change a family, and shape our community forever.

## **Funding Opportunity**

We are seeking philanthropic support to establish an endowment that will:

- Provide consistent support for our GCH Project ADAM program
- Expand cardiac emergency preparedness programs into more schools
- Train and retain the staff who make this program possible
- Create a flexible innovation fund that allows us to respond quickly to emerging needs

While our goal is to raise \$2 million, gifts of any amount are welcome and will help us reach this important milestone.

## **The opportunity to make a difference**

With your support, we can establish a team of life savers; a team to train and support the critical infrastructure of our schools and youth sports organizations. With your support we can ensure our coaches, school nurses and teachers are fast-acting, well-trained and ready to act and intervene to save a child's life.

## **To learn more or explore naming opportunities, please contact:**

Jill S. Halterman, MD, MPH  
Physician-in-Chief, Golisano Children's Hospital  
Jill\_Halterman@urmc.rochester.edu