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Lifesaving PulsePoint app now available in Kansas City region

Local city, county, fire department and emergency medical services leaders have joined forces to bring the lifesaving PulsePoint app to the Kansas City region. The free mobile app alerts citizens trained in hands-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) when someone in a nearby public place suffers sudden cardiac arrest. Public safety communications centers send alerts through the app at the same time they dispatch first responders to the scene. The app also notifies users of the closest available automated external defibrillator (AED).

“Sudden cardiac arrest is one of the leading causes of death in the United States, affecting more than 350,000 people each year,” said Chief John Paul Jones of the Kansas City, Kansas, Fire Department. “This cutting-edge technology can save lives by alerting people who can start CPR before an ambulance arrives. With sudden cardiac arrest, seconds count.”

The Heart of America Metro Fire Chiefs’ Council and Mid-America Regional Council Emergency Rescue committee (commonly known as MARCER) were instrumental in bringing PulsePoint to the Kansas City region. “It was important to us for this to be a regional effort,” said Richard Carrizzo, president of Heart of America Fire Chiefs and fire chief for the Southern Platte Fire Protection District.

The app is now available through three agencies that dispatch emergency medical services in all or part of six counties in the metro:

- The Kansas City, Missouri, Fire Department dispatches for all of the city of Kansas City, Missouri (including portions of Platte, Clay and Jackson counties) as well as the Southern Platte Fire Protection District, Central Jackson County Fire Department, and the cities of Raytown, Grandview, North Kansas City and Claycomo.
- The Kansas City, Kansas, Fire Department dispatches emergency medical services for all of Wyandotte County, Kansas.
- The Johnson County Emergency Communications Center dispatches for all of Johnson County and part of Miami County in Kansas.

“Combined, these areas have a population of over 1.3 million. This is the largest regional effort to simultaneously implement Pulse Point in the nation,” said Carrizzo. Additional cities and counties in the region may join later.

The American Heart Association estimates that effective hands-only CPR provided immediately after a cardiac emergency can double or triple a person's chance of survival, but only 46 percent of sudden cardiac arrest victims received bystander CPR in 2016. Even fewer receive a potentially lifesaving therapeutic shock from a public access AED.

“When sudden cardiac arrest strikes, each minute without CPR reduces the chance of survival by 7-10 percent, so early bystander CPR and rapid defibrillation from an AED can be crucial,” said Chief Paul Berardi of the Kansas City, Missouri, Fire Department. “I encourage every resident who has CPR training to download the app and support our region’s first responders in saving lives.”

Anyone with a smartphone can download the free PulsePoint Respond app through the Google Play Store and Apple App Store. Once the app is installed, select the agency serving the area where you live or work to receive alerts. Users may follow more than one agency. PulsePoint is currently active in more than 2,500 cities across the country.

“The regional implementation of PulsePoint is a great example of the bistate cooperation we have among emergency services agencies in Greater Kansas City,” said Hannes Zacharias, county manager for Johnson County, Kansas, and co-chair of the Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee. “We’re pleased to be able to offer this great service across the metro.”

Outreach for the PulsePoint rollout in the Kansas City region is funded in part by the CTIA Wireless Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to developing and supporting initiatives that use wireless technology to help American communities. “The PulsePoint app is a perfect example of how wireless technology can be used to help save lives,” said CTIA Wireless Foundation Executive Director Athena Polydorou. “The Kansas City region has long been a pioneer in smart city technology, and we are so proud to play a role in making its citizens PulsePoint connected.”

For more information, visit www.marc.org/pulsepoint or www.pulsepoint.org.

About Heart of America Metro Fire Chiefs Association (HOAFC): HOAFC represents more than 70 fire departments in the Greater Kansas City region. The association is governed by a Board of Directors and led by a President and Vice-President (one from Missouri and one from Kansas) and a Treasurer. HOAFC collaborates with the Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee and its subcommittees and partners to implement fire-service related initiatives in the region, including hazardous materials and heavy rescue planning, training and response.

About the PulsePoint Foundation: Through the use of location-aware mobile devices, PulsePoint is a 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation building applications that work with local public safety agencies to improve communications with citizens and off-duty personnel, empowering them to help reduce the millions of annual deaths from sudden cardiac arrest.

About the CTIA Wireless Foundation: Since 2014, the CTIA Wireless Foundation has been a key sponsor of PulsePoint working to deploy the app in communities across the country. PulsePoint is currently active in over 2,500 cities in 28 states.

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