CPR saves lives. We as health care professionals all know that. Increasingly, the lay population is getting on board as well, because the sooner someone (anyone) initiates CPR, the better the outcome.

According to USA Today: “A new study out of Denmark states that people who suffer a cardiac arrest in Denmark today are 3 times more likely to survive than a decade ago, thanks largely to a nationwide effort to teach people CPR.

Denmark launched a national effort in 2005 to teach its residents to perform CPR. The country gave out 150,000 instructional kits; kids began learning CPR as early as elementary school. Teens were required to learn CPR in order to get a driver’s license. The results have been dramatic, say authors of a study in today’s *Journal of the American Medical Association,* or **JAMA**…In Denmark, the number of cardiac arrest victims who received “bystander” CPR--from someone other than a health professional--more than doubled, from 22% in 2001 to 45% in 2010. In the same time period, the percentage of cardiac arrest victims who arrived at a hospital alive increased from 8% to 22%.”

Approximately 300,000 people in the U.S. go into cardiac arrest every year and about 90% of those die, according to the CDC.

So the District of Columbia is listening.

ServeDC offers CPR training to anyone who lives or works in D.C., **for free**. ServeDC contracts out through The Red Cross and will offer whatever you need, be it First Aid, CPR (both infant /child and Adult), and AED.

As the Lafayette Elementary School Nurse, I organized training for all school staff interested in becoming certified. The Red Cross has done 2 classes for us this year, totaling 23 teachers and other staff, all now trained to respond with immediate CPR in an emergency.

The parents at Lafayette also pulled together more than 20 people for training. And my goal is to initiate CPR training, through ServeDC and the Red Cross, for all 5th graders this year.

With only one school nurse per school, the more help we get from our immediate community, the better our chances are in an emergency. Preparation can start with us.

Chris Cockrell, RN, BSN

School Health, Lafayette Elementary

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