



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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King County has world's highest survival rate for cardiac arrest.

Bellevue, Wash – North East King County Regional Public Safety Communications Agency (NORCOM), a partner in the King County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Medic One System, plays a vital role in cardiac arrest survival rates. Someone who has suffered a cardiac arrest in King County has a greater chance of survival than anywhere else in the world. The survival rate for cardiac arrest in King County hit an all-time high of 62 percent in 2013. By comparison, cardiac survival rates in New York City, Chicago, and other urban areas have been recorded in the single digits.

King County's success in saving lives is based in a coordinated, regional system where everyone – dispatchers, first responders, fire departments, law enforcement, paramedics, urgent care centers, and others – is guided by consistent medical direction and evidence-based practice.

The cardiac arrest survival rate in King County has seen a dramatic rise over the past 11 years – from an above average 27 percent in 2002 to 62 percent in 2013. NORCOM telecommunicators contribute significantly to that survival rate by utilizing their training to quickly recognize signs and symptoms of cardiac arrest then instantly provide efficient telephone CPR instructions. Other equally contributing factors include the adoption of high-performance CPR methods by emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to maximize oxygen circulation, increased public availability to automated external defibrillators (AEDs), high rates of CPR training for local residents, and a regional paramedic training program that exceeds national standards for certification.

NORCOM Executive Director, Tom Orr, states “NORCOM is proud of these accomplishments and our long-standing, cooperative partnership with our 14 Fire/EMS agencies and King County Emergency Medical Services. This partnership continues every day to make a difference in the lives of countless citizens including a 14 year old boy who suffered a cardiac arrest during a basketball game in 2013. The NORCOM dispatcher followed King County medical criteria in giving critical life-saving CPR instructions to spectators until emergency crews arrived. Thanks to those quick actions, Shoreline Fire paramedics were able to stabilize the boy and continue treatment until his arrival at the hospital. The end result was that the boy returned home safely to his parents. In King County, this kind of outcome occurs regularly thanks to the leadership, foresight and management of King County Emergency Medical Services.”

NORCOM provides high quality emergency service communications to the public for emergency medical services, fire, and police agencies. NORCOM is located in Bellevue, Washington. www.norcom.org

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