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# Santa Ana schools get heart-starting devices

The defibrillators may help members of athletic staffs save students' lives.

By **FERMIN LEAL**  
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**SANTA ANA** • Six high schools in Santa Ana will each get three defibrillators in an effort to prevent the deaths of young athletes from cardiac arrest.

The Santa Ana Unified School District will provide Century, Santa Ana, Segerstrom, Godinez, Valley and Saddleback high schools with the automated external defibrillators.

The district has not decided what to do with a 19th heart machine it is getting.

The toolbox-size devices are meant for use when a person nears cardiac arrest. They send bursts of electricity to hearts that are quivering instead of pumping. The devices, often used in conjunction with CPR, can save lives, paramedics say.

Santa Ana Unified trustees this week approved the purchase of 12 devices at a cost of about \$1,250 a unit. Two groups will give an additional seven machines to the district for free.

Six of the machines were donated by the Kevin Armstrong, M.D. Memorial Sports Foundation, named for a UC Irvine sports medicine doctor and Santa Ana High team physician. He was 39 when he died of

heart disease in 2005.

One defibrillator was donated by the Greg Moyer Fund, a group started by the parents of a Pennsylvania teenager who died of cardiac arrest during a high school basketball game.

"There is nothing worse than having to wait for the paramedics to arrive when a student goes down," district trustee Rob Richardson said. "With these machines, we can definitely save some lives."

In the past decade, a handful of local high school athletes have died of cardiac arrest during competitions. The most recent was Dana Hills High School freshman Megan Myers, 14, who collapsed last fall during a cross country competition.

Santa Ana Unified coaches, trainers and other staff mem-

bers will learn how to use the defibrillators. Trainers will carry the machines with them to many athletic competitions, officials said.

Seven of Orange County's 28 public school districts have installed the defibrillators or are planning to do so soon, said officials from the county Department of Education.

Theresa Fox of Cardiac Science, the company that will supply the district with the machines, said the machines are uncommon at schools.

"We're slowly getting more and more of these defibrillators into many schools across the state," she said. "High schools in Santa Ana Unified will be ahead of the game."

Register staff writer Greg Haredesty contributed to this report.

## DISTRICTS WITH DEFIBRILLATORS

Current school districts with automated external defibrillators on campuses:

- **Anaheim Union High** has installed one AED at each of its eight high schools.
- **Brea-Olinda Unified** is in the planning stages of authorizing an athletic director to carry a device to sporting events.
- **Huntington Beach Union** has installed four AEDs at each of its six high schools, as well as at the district office and continuation schools.
- **Irvine Unified** has the devices available to athletic directors at its five high schools.
- **Placentia-Yorba Linda** has installed one AED at its four high schools.
- **Saddleback Valley Unified** has installed a device at each of its five high schools.
- **Santa Ana Unified** will have three machines at each of the district's six high schools.