



A demonstration of the defibrillator's use.

AEDs to be all over Bim

Barbadians who suffer cardiac arrest in public places will soon have access to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) thanks to the efforts of the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados.

Chief Executive Officer of the Heart & Stroke Foundation, Gina Pitts, gave this assurance to Barbadians and visitors today during an interview with **Barbados TODAY**.

Noting that the Heart & Stroke Foundation is the charity of choice this year for the British High Commission which welcomes its new High Commissioner, Her Excellency Victoria Dean, Pitt disclosed that the foundation will be hosting a dinner at the commissioner's residence on Pine Hill, St Michael on January 25 at 7 pm.

Pitts pointed out that the event is called **Hearts of Children**, a World Heart Federation initiative, which strives to protect the hearts of women and children from cardiovascular disease.

Giving the rationale behind the staging of the event which organizers hope to raise a minimum of \$30,000 to purchase AEDs for distribution to organizations and institutions, Pitts said: "When we look at the chain of survival for anybody whose heart is not functioning properly or has stopped completely, it is very important that we observe the five links to the chain of survival which the American Heart Association has established. We are accredited by that association so we have to abide by the particular chain.

"The five links of the survival chain are important. There must be immediate recognition of cardiac-arrest; activation of emergency response; ability to perform cardio-pulmonary resuscitation with emphasis on chest compression; access to rapid defibrillation and an ambulance service. The ambulance service should be carrying AEDs and I am aware that the government ones have the latest on board. You need your ambulance to be there to give the patient certain drugs which will help with the cardiac arrest situation," Pitts added.

Stressing the critical importance of the five links to survival, Pitts said: "In any chain you are only as good as your missing link. Very often people do not know how to perform chest compressions and they do not have access to defibrillators."

Pitts pointed that the foundation hoped to donate defibrillators to high risk areas such as the Barbados Community College, the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies, the Paediatrics Ward at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the National Sports Council, the Challenor School in St Thomas, the AC Graham Development Centre and summer camps.

The chief executive officer announced that the foundation will also be staging a **Red Dress Gala** at the Concorde Experience at the Grantley Adams International Airport on March 1.

"It is a gala event for women, but men are welcomed. Ladies are expected to wear red and walk down a red carpet. The event hopes to raise awareness of heart disease among women," Pitts said. **(NC)**