



Active shooter or mass casualty incidents such as those that occurred at Columbine High School (Littleton, Colorado), Sandy Hook Elementary (Newtown, Connecticut), Century Movie Theater (Aurora, Colorado), and now the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida have become a reality of modern American life. But until recently, the responses to these tragic incidents have focused more on law enforcement goals (stop the shooting) than trauma care goals (stop the bleeding).

On October 6, 2015, the White House launched the “Stop the Bleed” campaign. The focus of this campaign is to provide bystanders with the tools and knowledge to stop life threatening bleeding. Our first responders and the military have gained extensive experience and knowledge on how to stop bleeding and this campaign will put those skills in the hands of the public to save lives. Severe uncontrolled bleeding can kill within minutes, potentially before trained responders can arrive on scene. Research has shown that bystanders, with little or no medical training, can become heroic lifesavers. Similar to the use of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or automatic external defibrillators (AEDs), improving public awareness about how to stop severe bleeding and increasing access to tourniquets and bleeding control kits can be the difference between life and death.

For almost a year, surgeons and first responder organizations have been working to increase the number of survivors of an active shooter or mass casualty incident. An important part of this initiative is to place Bleeding Control Kits including tourniquets in public places where they could potentially be needed quickly, a goal set forth by the Hartford Consensus, a collaborative group of trauma surgeons, federal law enforcement, and emergency responders. Driving the recommendations of the Hartford Consensus is the fact that in active shooter or intentional mass casualty events, victims all too often bleed to death before medically trained emergency responders can reach the scene.

Another key call to action of the Hartford Consensus is to educate and equip the public to respond to the need of victims, keeping in mind that sometimes these people, though uninjured or minimally injured, may be victims of the incident themselves. However, activating that type of response effort means that tourniquets and other equipment need to be broadly available in the schools, offices, shopping centers, churches, and other public places.

“Just as automatic defibrillators are easily usable and quickly available to the public, so should easily applied tourniquets be available in a similar manner and locations,” said Norman McSwain, MD, FACS, medical director, pre-hospital trauma life support.

The Central Ohio Trauma System (COTS), an affiliate of the Columbus Medical Association has been working with hospitals and other community healthcare partners for over 15 years planning and coordinating for the next big disaster to hit the region. They have been formally recognized by the Ohio Department of Health as the regional coordinator for 27 hospitals in the 15 counties collectively defining central Ohio.

The Central Region Healthcare Preparedness Coalition has taken on the Stop the Bleed Campaign as a regional initiative. Tourniquets have been purchased for law enforcement officers and will also be placed in strategic locations around the region where the public gathers. Each county in the region that houses a local healthcare preparedness coalition will be conducting Stop the Bleed training sessions for the public. Much like the CPR classes that target the lay person, Stop the Bleed courses will educate non-medical or first responders to save lives by compressing the wound and applying a tourniquet. By expanding this campaign regionally, the number of trained responders significantly increase with the target goal of saving lives so that no one bleeds to death.

The tourniquet allocation program is sponsored by the Central Ohio Trauma System who represents the Central Ohio Regional Healthcare Preparedness Coalition Steering Committee. This program is paid for with funding provided by the Ohio Department of Health along with funds from the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response.

For more information on the Stop the Bleed Campaign, visit www.dhs.gov/stopthebleed.

For more information on the Stop the Bleed Initiative in the central Ohio region contact Jodi Keller, Associate Director of Healthcare Emergency Preparedness at the Central Ohio Trauma System jkeller@centralohiotraumasystem.org