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## **First Aid for Severe Trauma Curriculum Being Developed for High Schools**

**Bethesda, Md.** – A life-saving course is in development to train high school students around the country how to deliver first aid skills for severely injured trauma victims. The education and training course is being created by the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health (NCDMPH) in partnership with The American Red Cross (Red Cross). Students who successfully complete the course will receive certificates documenting their first aid training.

Traumatic injury is the leading cause of death for Americans 1-46 years old. Among the many causes are workplace accidents, motor vehicle accidents (there are 6 million vehicle collisions annually), and active shooter incidents – including more than 30 shootings in schools this year alone. Experts at the NCDMPH, led by Dr. Craig Goolsby, are collaborating with the Red Cross to develop the "First Aid for Severe Trauma," or FAST course, to teach school-aged teens to treat severe trauma victims for these incidents and other traumatic bleeding events.

FAST is geared primarily to high school-aged youth and will educate them on how to differentiate between life-threatening and non-life-threatening bleeding, as well as how to stanch bleeding from severe wounds through the proper use of tourniquets and direct pressure. High school students will also learn effective emergency communications skills, and personal safety for rescuers and severe trauma victims through FAST.

NCDMPH has conducted a series of studies with more than 1,200 members of the public, including hundreds of high school-aged students. These studies have tested various education modalities in an effort to identify the most effective ways to teach this life-saving information, i.e. online, just-in-time instructions, instructor-led training, or a combination. The National Center and the Red Cross will release the FAST course to high schools in the beginning of 2021 at no cost, with a goal of nationwide adoption.

Development of the FAST curricula stems from the White House-launched "Stop the Bleed" effort between several federal agencies and public partners to educate and empower citizens to stop life-threatening hemorrhage after trauma-related events, such as an act of violence, a car crash, a terrorist attack, or a natural disaster.

Stop the Bleed is based on important lessons learned on the battlefield and more than a decade of research by the U.S. military. Several military studies have shown that immediate control of severe blood loss significantly decreased preventable deaths on the battlefield. With this knowledge, the military joined forces with a wide array of organizations, including the Red Cross, and the Hartford Consensus – a committee that formed in the wake of the tragic Sandy Hook school shooting. Together, they worked to push these lessons learned in the military out to the public, which led to the White House launch of the Stop the Bleed campaign in 2015. NCDMPH has continued to lead in Stop the Bleed efforts, and the FAST course for teens takes it another step further.

“It’s a disseminated effort. There are many organizations working in different ways to support this campaign,” Goolsby said. “There are everyday tragedies around the country, and if people – including high school students – know what to do in these circumstances, such as simply knowing how to apply pressure to a bleeding wound, they might help save a life.”

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