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Contact: Sarah Marshall, Office of
External Affairs

Email: sarah.marshall@usuhs.edu

Lifesaving “First Aid for Severe Trauma” Designed for Grades 9-12 Launched, Available Nationwide

USU’s National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health developed first national “Stop the Bleed” course designed for high schoolers with Red Cross, Homeland Security

Bethesda, Md. – The first “Stop the Bleed” course designed for high school students -- First Aid for Severe Trauma™ or FAST™ -- is now available nationwide. FAST™ teaches the public how to save a life in the moments following a life-threatening injury, such as those sustained in car crashes, or falls.

FAST™ was developed by the Uniformed Services University’s (USU) National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health (NCDMPH) in collaboration with the American Red Cross and through funding from the Department of Homeland Security’s Science and Technology Directorate. Traumatic injuries are the leading killer of people between the ages of one and 44 in the U.S., causing even more deaths than cancer, HIV, or the flu – in fact, a person can die from blood loss in just a few minutes. In hopes of combating these statistics, FAST™ will empower high schoolers to take action, teaching them how to apply pressure and use a tourniquet, communicate with 9-1-1 dispatchers and fellow rescuers, while also keeping safe, should they find themselves facing a life-threatening injury.

The American Red Cross will offer the course and its digital materials at no charge to high school students under the age of 19. FAST™ is available in three learning modalities: instructor-led, blended (online didactic session plus in-person, hands-on skills training), and online-only. An in-person skills session, with successful demonstration of both direct pressure and a tourniquet on a lifelike replica of a limb, is required for a student to earn a two-year Red Cross FAST™ certification. The course can be taught by high school teachers trained as FAST™ instructors, and it fits conveniently into a school’s existing curriculum.

FAST™ adapts important first aid techniques from combat lessons learned and more than a decade of research by the U.S. military, explained Dr. Craig Goolsby, NCDMPH science director. Military studies have shown that immediate control of severe bleeding significantly decreased preventable deaths on the battlefield. With this knowledge, the military joined forces several years ago with an array of private and public organizations to push these lessons learned out to the public, which culminated with the White House launching the “Stop the Bleed” campaign in 2015. NCDMPH has continued to lead efforts to educate the public about these important life-saving lessons, and the FAST™ course for teens takes it another step further.

“It’s so beneficial to teach these lessons directly to high schooler students,” Goolsby said. “Not only are they willing to learn new skills and help others when needed, they also help spread this important information to friends, family and the next generation of Americans.”

For more information on FAST™, visit <https://ncdmph.usuhs.edu/fast>.

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About the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences: The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, founded by an act of Congress in 1972, is the nation’s federal health sciences university and the academic heart of the Military Health System. USU students are primarily active duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service who receive specialized education in tropical and infectious diseases, TBI and PTSD, disaster response and humanitarian assistance, global health, and acute trauma care. USU also has graduate programs in oral biology, biomedical sciences and public health committed to excellence in research. The University’s research program covers a wide range of areas important to both the military and public health. For more information about USU and its programs, visit www.usuhs.edu.