



**Extensive
HeartSine AED
News and Media Coverage
in Singapore**

Heart attack? Cabbies can be lifesavers now

Aw Cheng Wei

The next time a person suffers a heart attack on the street, cabbies may go to his rescue.

SMRT taxis will be equipped with automated external defibrillators (AED) in a three-year pilot programme launched last Friday.

The device can send an electric shock to the heart to revive it in the event of sudden cardiac arrest.

About 120 SMRT cabbies have volunteered for this AED On Wheels initiative introduced by SMRT and Temasek Cares. The philanthropic arm of local investment firm Temasek Holdings gave \$376,500 for the initiative, with the promise

to review its results in three years. The money will be used for cabbies' training, and equipment leasing and maintenance.

The pilot aims to buy time for those who suffer a heart attack, before Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) officers show up. Depending on road conditions, cabbies can respond to distress calls in about three minutes – shaving about eight minutes off the average response time officers take, said SCDF chief medical officer Ng Yih Yng at a media conference last Friday.

“People on site are obviously going to be faster than (officers),” Colonel Dr Ng said, noting that the SCDF receives around 1,900 calls about heart attacks every year. This



Cabby Simon Ngiam with the automated external defibrillator in his taxi. About 120 SMRT cabbies have volunteered for this initiative. ST PHOTO: AZIZ HUSSIN

is about five calls on average a day.

SMRT Roads managing director Benny Lim said selected cabbies were sent for a four-hour training in September. Cabbies will be notified of a heart attack through the SCDF's myResponder app if they are within 1.5km of a distress call.

Participating driver Simon Ngiam, 46, said: “I will ask my passenger for permission if I received the notification. If I am driving an empty cab, I will definitely go and help... A person's life is at stake.”

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