

First Aid Education European Network Meeting Hosted by Irish Red Cross

11th – 13th October 2012, Malahide, Co Dublin



Background

The Red Cross & Red Crescent First Aid Education European Network (FAEEN) meets annually to share experiences and discuss challenges in providing first aid education. The aim is to enable access for as many people as possible in Europe to first aid education. FAEEN represents a link between operational reality and governance and supports the smooth dissemination of first aid information for each Red Cross & Red Crescent national society.

This year Irish Red Cross hosted the meeting with representatives from thirty seven countries including: Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Luxemburg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, The Netherlands, Turkey, United States of America and Uzbekistan. Seventy three delegates in total attended. Representatives from the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and the European Reference Centre for First Aid Education also attended.

Theme

The theme of the meeting was New Technologies in First Aid Education. Mr Donal Forde, Secretary General of Irish Red Cross in opening the meeting welcomed the delegates from across the world inviting them "to share with each other their experiences of using new technologies for the enhancement of first aid education across Europe and further afield". Dr Geoff King, Director PHECC in addressing the group spoke of

the value of collaborative practice and his "belief that the best health outcomes are achieved when well prepared health professionals work in collaboration and partnership in both the practice and educational setting".

APP

The meeting discussed the value of creating a universal APP which could be easily accessed by each Red Cross & Red Crescent national society at a reasonable cost and invited national societies to sign up for the pilot study.

Research Findings

Bernie Stevenson, National Training Support Manager, Irish Red Cross presented the findings of the research conducted with NUI Maynooth on the transfer of first aid knowledge and skills. The research shows that 95% of Irish people are not confident to take action in an emergency and that 62% are afraid that they will do something incorrect if they step forward to help in an emergency situation.

The research recommends the inclusion of a module on the transfer of learning and the bystander effect in all Irish Red Cross first aid courses to address this reluctance.

IFRC 2020

The challenge of the growing number of older people with increased health care expenditures, facing social exclusion with not enough people to offer care and support to them is highlighted in the IFRC 2020 strategy and is recognised as an issue for Europe in the coming years. FAEEN is designing a first aid training programme for older people which will be rolled out by national societies.

Prisons

This year as part of FAEEN the Irish Red Cross, Irish Prison Service and the FAEEN Steering Group organised for the delegates to visit Wheatfield Prison to see the Community Based Health & First Aid project in action. Governors and inmates from six prisons involved in the project were in attendance. The inmates who operate as Irish Red Cross volunteers within the prisons, demonstrated their first aid skills and explained the impact their involvement in the project is having on their lives.

Projects/ Exhibitors

Representatives from the 37 Red Cross & Red Crescent national societies in attendance presented information on the most innovative and current project to the meeting. These projects included the following:

- First Aid for Vulnerable Group
- Iphone and Android applications
- Promotion of safe behaviour
- Drive and Help with First Aid
- Multiplier Approach – enabling other partners to provide first aid training
- First Aid for Traffic policemen
- Developing a National Contact Centre
- Prevention of Domestic Accidents
- School Health Programme
- First Aid Training for Blind People
- Master Instructor Training
- Introducing first aid training to marginalised groups

Over the three days, thirteen exhibitors, including PHECC provided the delegates with information on e learning, Apps, manikins for instruction, first aid kits, alarm systems, automated external defibrillation, AED training devices, therapy equipment, CPR feedback and ER team management software tools.



Questions



Recommendations

Each year the network prepares a set of recommendations encouraging each Red Cross and Red Crescent national society to promote the role of first aid in the community. The recommendations of the 2012 meeting strongly encourage national societies to:

- Re-affirm their role as auxiliary of their government,
- promote social mobilisation and advocacy,
- be well prepared in case of health emergency,
- educate the citizen in first aid and disaster preparedness to be the first link in case of emergency,
- build resilience within society,
- embrace new technologies as a learning tool

Closing Statement

Anthony Lawlor, Irish Red Cross National Director of Units closed the meeting. He acknowledged the work of FAEEN which, together with the First Aid Reference Centre in Paris is the strongest network within the Red Cross & Red Crescent movement in Europe. He thanked PHECC for their participation and support in the meeting and noted that Ireland was the only country in the European network where a single regulatory body was responsible for training and pre hospital regulation for the Statutory, private and voluntary sector. He noted also the growing interest in promoting first aid via new technology and social media and thanked the Irish Red Cross staff and volunteers who had arranged to host this event for the first time in Ireland.

Question:

I have recently completed an Emergency First Response (EFR) course and I am seeking clarification from PHECC whether I can practise EFR outside my volunteer role with one of the voluntary ambulance services?

Response:

As a rule, you should only practise EFR when you are working (paid or volunteering) for a service provider that is authorised by PHECC to implement CPGs at EFR level. CPG approval is PHECC's mechanism to assess and monitor the capacity of the service provider to create and maintain an environment to ensure patient safety. Other responder relevant conditions to implement CPGs are:

- that the responder maintains current certification as outlined in PHECC's Education & Training standard; and
- has received training and is competent in, the skills and medications specified in the CPG being utilised.

However, in your walk of life you may opportunistically come across patients needing pre-hospital emergency care in a so called Good Samaritan capacity. Then it would be appropriate for you to use your EFR knowledge and skills to assist the patient while awaiting the arrival of emergency medical services. This should not be confused with a responder on a duty (expectations to provide care) at an event or similar.

It is difficult to provide definite advice on the legal situation regarding the provision of pre-hospital care. However, the likelihood of being successfully sued is negligible due to the absence of related statutory or common law duties and because it is difficult to establish negligence linked to harm. In summary, if you act in line with your level of training and not in a negligent fashion, it is unlikely that any legal claim against you would be successful.

The memorandum prepared by Dr Ciaran D Craven BL, is not a complete legal analysis of all the issues that can arise and is not specific legal advice. However, it does provide general guidance on the matter. You can see the full memorandum on our website www.phecc.ie under Council/Legislation.

In addition the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011 was passed into Irish Law on the 2nd August 2011. The Act offers Good Samaritans and volunteer responders further protection from personal liability. You can download the full version of the Act (a PDF) at <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie>.