

## Taiwan to have defibrillators in public places

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**Singapore:** The Taiwanese legislature body amended the Emergency Medical Services Act to enable the installation of automated external defibrillators (AED) in public places. This will help save lives through the prompt use of a defibrillator on patients suffering from a cardiac arrest in public.

Deputy director-general of the Department of Health (DOH), Bureau of Medical Affairs, Wang Tsung-hsi, highlighted that the DOH hopes in the first stage of implementation to bring Taiwan up to the UK standard, which is 25.6 sets per 100,000 people.

The DOH will determine the order of priority for venues where AEDs will be installed within three-to-six months, according to the density of old people in the area, the risk level for medical emergencies, proximity to medical facilities and the potential effectiveness of the device in each location, Wang added. "For example, fitness centers or parks where people over age 65 often gather to exercise are prime candidates for AEDs."

The amended law also exempts people who try but fail to save a life with the device from criminal and civil liabilities. Off-duty medical professionals are included in this immunity.

According to government statistics, in Taiwan about 20,000 people each year are found without vital signs before they can be taken to a hospital. Wang also cited the experience of Japan, where the installation of AEDs in locations such as train stations, airports and shopping malls has increased the survival rate of cardiac arrest victims to 38 percent, compared to seven percent before AEDs were made available.