

Letter from the Vice-President

by Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States
The White House, Washington, DC

When tragedy strikes anywhere in this nation, the willingness and capability of everyday citizens to take action instead of being passive bystanders can mean the difference between life or death.

With very little training and equipment, the individuals closest to the scene of an accident or mass casualty situation can control bleeding until first responders arrive to take over treatment.

This report is a call to action for every person to take responsibility for learning the basics about how to respond to uncontrolled bleeding and to put those lessons into use when circumstances have placed them in a position to help.

Just like training programs and public awareness campaigns regarding cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the Heimlich Maneuver have helped save countless lives over the past few decades, a national plan of action regarding how to maximize survivability for victims of a mass casualty situation has the potential to increase the resilience and readiness of our nation to the threats that now confront us.

And just as the experiences of the battlefield have forced advances in medical and surgical science for generations, the hard won experiences of our nation's combat medical teams show the opportunities and limitations of existing methods to stabilize and treat victims of external hemorrhage and trauma under extreme circumstances.

These methods and lessons can and must be applied to civilian life in order to meet the National Preparedness Goal established by President Obama, and increase the resiliency of our communities to unexpected tragedies.

The panel of experts assembled as part of the Joint Committee to Create a National Policy to Enhance Survivability from Active Shooter and Intentional Mass Casualty Events draws on an extraordinary breadth of experience and expertise.

The Committee, chaired by Lenworth M. Jacobs, Jr., MD, FACS, of the American College of Surgeons, includes academics and practitioners, civilians and members of the military, representatives of the highest levels of government across agencies and within the White House, including my personal physician.

I want to thank each of the participants for the dedication and professionalism they have shown in pursuit of that goal, and I am confident that their work will save lives.

The common sense recommendations within this report have the potential to equip citizens with the skills to respond, and the confidence to know they can—and must—make a difference. ♦

JOE BIDEN
Vice-President of the United States

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