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Defibrillator Roll-Out for Remote Areas

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A major roll-out of life-saving portable defibrillators will start shortly to remote clinics throughout the Northern Territory.

Minister for Health Dr Peter Toyne said the Northern Territory Government will spend about $450,000 to buy 23 machines and train staff to use them.

“This is literally a lifeline for people in remote communities – this is the sort of equipment that makes a world of difference in clinics,” Dr Toyne said.

“These highly technical emergency medical equipment which can provide a person's vital signs such as pulse, blood pressure, blood oxygen content, electrical heart patterns (ECG).”

“Should the person have a cardiac arrest, where the heart stops beating completely, the defibrillator is able to provide an electric shock to the heart to restart it.”

“This type of defibrillator is the Swiss Army knife of medical equipment, compact, easy to use, and many applications.”

“It’s all part of the Remote Health Branch Business Plan which aims to standardise the equipment available in remote clinics.”

“It means staff can go to any clinic and be familiar with the equipment.”

“These defibrillators are also compatible with emergency air patient transport carriers – the Aerial Medical Services and the Royal Flying Doctor Services.”

The roll-out is the latest in the Government’s push to improve health in remote areas:

- $450,000 to the Centre for Remote Health
- $100,000 to CRANA
- $80,000 to Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia to provide emergency training to remote health staff across the NT
- $50,000 to Tjitikalla (CHECK RICHARD) for provision of additional health vehicle
- $1.4 million in the 2004/05 budget for the elimination of remote single nurse communities

The first defibrillators can be expected to arrive in clinics by the end of the year.