



CARDIAC & RESUSCITATION, NEWS, PATIENT CARE

Oregon Man Saved by Quick CPR and Use of AED by Coworker After

Cardiac Arrest

By [Jeff A. Woodin, NRP, FAHA](#) | 1.23.18



Andy* was preparing for a meeting after lunch on July 7, 2016, when his colleagues noticed he looked like he was falling asleep.

“I remember someone asked if I was okay, and then they said I just slumped down in my chair,” he said.

Andy, who lives in Beaverton, Oregon and was 45 at the time, was having a cardiac arrest. His colleagues quickly called for help, and within moments, a coworker named Natalie Chitwood arrived and began performing [Hands-Only CPR](#), while another colleague grabbed the automated external defibrillator or AED.

Chitwood had deployed two shocks from the AED before a local sheriff’s deputy arrived to assist. A team of paramedics from Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue arrived a few minutes later and administered advance life support before transporting Andy to the hospital.

Once stabilized, Andy was put into a medically-induced coma for two days to allow his body to rest.

Doctors were unable to determine what triggered Andy’s heart to go into ventricular fibrillation resulting in cardiac arrest. An implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) was placed that will deliver a shock to his heart if a fatal rhythm is detected.

Andy’s heart didn’t experience any muscle damage due to the cardiac arrest, something doctors attributed to the fast actions of bystanders initiating CPR and using the AED.

The emotional toll of the incident was more difficult, Andy said, because he still doesn’t know what caused his cardiac arrest. For survivors like Andy who process a range of

emotions following a cardiac arrest the American Heart Association’s Support Network

emotions following a cardiac arrest, the American Heart Association's [Support Network](#), an online community, helps connect patients and families with shared experiences and provides a forum to express their thoughts, pose questions to other families, as well as healthcare professionals, and secure information relative to their condition.

Andy said the experience underscored the importance of having people [in the workplace trained in CPR](#).

"I always thought of CPR as something you might need with kids at home or with elderly parents," he said. "It makes you realize that an emergency can happen anywhere and to anyone."

An estimated 10,000 cardiac arrests occur annually in the workplace, however, a recent [survey](#) by the American Heart Association showed most U.S. employees are unprepared to handle health emergencies in the workplace because they lack training in CPR and First Aid.

About 90 percent of the more than 350,000 people in the U.S. who experience out-of-hospital cardiac arrests annually die, according to the American Heart Association Guidelines for CPR & ECC. But CPR, especially when performed immediately, [can double or triple](#) a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival.

Robert Petracca, captain of the Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue unit that responded to Andy's cardiac arrest, said the incident underscores the importance of the chain of survival and lay rescuers [trained in CPR](#).

"Everything that could have gone right did," Petracca said. "As first responders you realize that a lot of cardiac arrests don't have good outcomes and survival rates aren't that high, but in this case, when we heard there was immediate bystander CPR and an AED, we knew there was a better chance of survival."

Petracca said meeting Andy and his family was an inspiring experience, reinforcing his sense of mission.

“We train all the time for these situations and sometimes you can do everything right and not get a good outcome, so this was really poignant,” he said.

Petracca regularly works to raise awareness about the importance of CPR, using American Heart Association Hands-Only CPR materials for presentations at local schools and farmer’s markets to broaden access to training.

“We can all be partners to keep our community safe,” he said.

**For privacy issues, only Andy’s first name is being used.*