



Troopers are real lifesavers

Skills come into use as man collapses in office

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BY KEVIN SHEA

TRENTON -- For a person to survive a sudden cardiac emergency away from a hospital, a succession of actions need to happen correctly, like an immediate call to 911, quality cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of a portable defibrillator, if possible.

The American Heart Association calls it the Chain of Survival, and the more links a patient gets, the more their chances of survival rise.

On Wednesday, three state troopers and a coworker kept the chain intact for Jerome Loncosky, 77, an officer with the state chapter of the Disabled American Veterans, who collapsed in his office on West Hanover Street.

Loncosky had no pulse and was not breathing when a coworker rushed into the State Police's governmental security office and reported the emergency. But just 15 minutes later, after the troopers and a colleague revived him, Loncosky was taken from the building on stretcher with a strengthening pulse and breathing on his own.

Loncosky, of Allentown, remained in critical condition at Capital Health System at Mercer hospital yesterday.

Two of the troopers recounted the emergency yesterday and one of the Mercer County paramedics who responded to the call said everyone's actions led to Loncosky surviving the attack.

The chain started when a man walked into the State Police ground-floor office and told Sgt. Bruce Hay that a man had collapsed and was not breathing.

"Get the AED," Hay shouted to his colleague, Sgt. Eric Fowlkes, who retrieved the device, called an automatic external defibrillator.

Hay got to Loncosky first, on the fourth floor, and found coworkers doing CPR. Hay relieved them and first took a check of Loncosky's vital signs. He had no pulse and wasn't breathing.

So Hay, with coworker Donald Scholtes, started the CPR again. When Fowlkes arrived with Sgt. Darryl Humphrey, it became a team effort and they hooked up the device to Loncosky's chest.

The machine -- which speaks to the user -- delivered one shock,

then a second, as emergency responders started to arrive. They included Trenton EMS, Trenton Fire Engine Co. 10, who are also medical first responders, and the county paramedic crew of Mike Mooney and Kimberly Denelsbeck.

As Mooney and Denelsbeck took control of the scene, just after the second shock, their own monitors showed Loncosky had regained a pulse and was starting to breathe on his own.

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Hay, a 16-year trooper and Fowlkes, a 20-year veteran, said they'd never had to use the AED, but train on it regularly. And they do not consider themselves heroes. "It could have been any one of us," Hay said.

Their supervisor, Sgt. First Class Jerry Madden, said the three sergeants were just doing their job, but they did it well. "They acted exactly as I expect them to."

Mooney, the paramedic, impressed with the teamwork, wrote a memo to his supervisors at Capital Health System.

It goes beyond the AED, Mooney said. The 911 call was immediate by the coworkers, with specific locations, and emergency responders were met by a uniformed trooper who rushed them to the patient.

"As is supported by the American Heart Association's Chain of Survival, it is my belief that the actions of the patient's coworkers in recognizing the situation and initiating CPR, followed by the timely delivery of defibrillation and high quality CPR by the (state troopers) were primary contributors to the survival of the patient," Mooney wrote in his memo.

"Without the assistance of the general public and first responder law enforcement officers, our chances of successful resuscitation are slim. It is only by the joint effort of the public and public safety agencies, as demonstrated here, can we truly impact survival from cardiac arrest."

Also yesterday, Fowlkes added a personal touch and checked on Loncosky at Mercer hospital, where he met with his daughter and received the best accolade, he said, a personal thank you.