

Testimony for 911 Bill Dr Lili Barouch

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It is truly a moment of life or death when a call to 911 is placed after someone collapses in cardiac arrest. Many people don't know CPR, or even if they do, have never used it or may panic and be unable to act without prompting.

Recently a patient of mine suffered a cardiac arrest at home. His wife was upstairs when she heard a thud. She ran downstairs and saw her teenage daughter frozen in panic and her husband lying on the floor. Neither of them knew CPR. She called 911 and thankfully EMTs came very quickly and were able to defibrillate him. He was incredibly lucky that he survived, but that quick of a response from EMS isn't always possible. His wife has suffered terrible guilt for not knowing CPR and not knowing what to do, almost at a level of PTSD. She cried in my office. She keeps getting asked by friends and family if she did CPR and feels terrible saying no and having to explain herself over and over.

Not everyone is so lucky. A colleague of mine cared for a high school student who collapsed at a sports event at a local high school. A bystander called 911 but was told "not to touch him since it sounded like he was having a seizure". Unfortunately, the apparent seizure was a cardiac arrest, and the student did not get CPR for over 10 minutes while they waited for an ambulance. Tragically, although doctors were eventually able to restart his heart, this student is nearly brain dead now.

You may not realize how time-critical survival is in cases of cardiac arrest. Survival goes down by 10% PER MINUTE if someone isn't getting CPR. A delay of only 5 minutes before CPR is started leaves you with only a 50-50 chance of making it. After 10 minutes, you're basically a goner, or you will have severe brain damage. Being coached to start CPR immediately, within 1-2 minutes, could be the difference between life and death for many victims of cardiac arrest. The importance of more training for our 911 specialists will be lifesaving, and this bill will allow for that.