

Local Advocate Attends Annual Gathering of Survivors, Medical Professionals to Increase Awareness, Survivability of Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Mexico, Maine October 14, 2009 – October is national Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Month and local community advocates Laurieann Milligan and Alberta Broomhall of the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association's (SCAA) Western Maine Affiliate joined nearly 300 medical professionals, volunteers, advocates, patients and survivors at the 2009 SCAA Annual Meeting & Medical Education Conference October 9-11, 2009, in Chicago, Illinois.

Throughout the conference, Milligan learned of medical advancements in the treatment of SCA, federal and state legislation addressing the public health crisis of SCA and emerging technologies to expand response, treatment and public knowledge about the risks and impact of SCA.

“This meeting was a valuable resource to increase my knowledge and help develop strategies to work with others to raise awareness about SCA,” said Milligan. “With nearly 300,000 Americans dying each year from sudden cardiac arrest, there is much to be done to teach more people CPR, place more AEDs in public places, improve emergency procedures, and encourage those at risk to seek preventive medical care.”

“Laurieann’s participation at the SCAA 2009 Annual Meeting plays a pivotal role in our efforts to increase awareness of SCA across the country and particularly among residents of Western Maine. Her passion and dedication to ensuring that citizens have access to better care, emergency personnel can respond to SCA occurrences more rapidly and effectively and medical professionals apply advanced treatments and therapies will ultimately lead to fewer deaths from SCA and create a safer Western Maine,” said Chris Chiamas, executive director of the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association.

In addition to business meetings and workshops, the conference social events included an SCA Survivor Celebration, where nearly 30 SCA survivors representing 20 states were feted. The SCAA Awards Dinner capped off the weekend, where organizations and individuals were honored for their efforts to raise awareness of SCA, prevent sudden cardiac death and improve cardiovascular health. This year’s award recipients were:

Medical Leadership Award

Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY)

Public Leadership Award

Governor Patrick Quinn of Illinois

Public Service Award

San Diego Project Heart Beat

June Daugherty Public Spirit Award

Dr. Joseph Ornato, Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center

Sudden cardiac arrest kills nearly 300,000 Americans each year. SCA is different than a heart attack; rather SCA is generally associated with an electrical disruption of the heart’s ability to properly function. Less than eight percent of victims survive because they do not receive immediate cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the shock of an automated external defibrillator (AED) to maintain blood circulation and restore the heart’s natural rhythm. Risk factors include a previous heart attack, coronary artery disease, family history of sudden death, diabetes, smoking and obesity.

The SCAA is the nation’s largest public advocacy organization exclusively dedicated to sudden cardiac arrest awareness and prevention. Its annual meeting in Chicago brought together volunteers from nearly 50 chapters and affiliates from across the country, including SCA survivors, physicians, nurses, emergency professionals and others touched by SCA. For more information, visit www.suddencardiacarrest.org.