

AHA Gold Star Award - Leon

An Aurora family is thankful for the work of Aurora Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and University of Colorado Health (UCHealth) who saved their loved one's life.

Leon came home from work on July 21 and was relaxing in front of the TV while his wife, Sue, pattered in the garden. She was delighted to see her green beans were sprouting and came in to tell Leon the good news. She noticed something was wrong though. The right side of his face was drooping, he began to gag, and couldn't talk. Sue, a nurse, immediately recognized the signs of a stroke, and called 911. The Aurora EMS team arrived within 10 minutes, accompanied by the UCHealth Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit (MSTU).

EMS personnel immediately carried Leon to the Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit where technicians performed a CAT scan that detected a condition requiring clot busting medication, which they administered within minutes right in front of the home. At the same time, data was sent to neurologists at University of Colorado Hospital. On the way to the hospital, Sue talked with the neurology team through video. The team explained that based on the data they were receiving, Leon needed immediate surgery to have the clot removed. Sue gave permission as the Unit was rolling to the ER and, upon arrival, Leon was immediately transferred into surgery.

Today, Leon is going through speech and physical therapy but he is able to walk and eat on his own. Sue knows that had the 911 system/Aurora EMS and the Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit not worked so well together, she would have lost her husband.

Several miracles occurred that day. The garden had green beans (or Sue would not have found her husband in time); Sue recognized the stroke and called 911; 911 immediately dispatched EMS on a probable stroke call; and at the same time, dispatched the UCHealth Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit. Both EMS and the MSTU arrived within 10 minutes. The stroke was diagnosed, medication administered on site, neurologists informed, and consent given for surgery while the MSTU was traveling to the hospital. Thanks to that communication and coordination, Leon was in surgery to remove the clot causing the stroke within 45 minutes of the 911 call.

Gold stars go to Sue, for recognizing her husband's stroke; to the Aurora 911/EMS System; to UCHealth for its investment in the Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit; and for the synchronized communication between EMS and the University of Colorado Hospital. Had any of those stars been left out, an Aurora family could have lost a husband and father.

To learn the F.A.S.T. system for recognizing and responding to a stroke:

http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/WarningSigns/Stroke-Warning-Signs-and-Symptoms_UCM_308528_SubHomePage.jsp

To learn more about the UCHealth Mobile Stroke Unit:

<https://www.uchealth.org/pages/services/brain-nervous-system-and-stroke-care/mobile-stroke-treatment-unit.aspx>