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Device makes CPR more effective

By Meredith Thorn mathorn@stcloudtimes.com

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Dawn Blake remembers having a backache last May before going into cardiac arrest at her Andover home.

It took rescue workers about 30 minutes to resuscitate her, and the 34-year-old believes she survived in part because of a new device called ResQPOD.

"The ResQPOD helped prolong the time they were able to do CPR on me," she said.

Hundreds of people die from cardiac arrest each day, said Keith Lurie, an electrophysiologist at Central Minnesota Heart Center at St. Cloud Hospital. Only 5 percent of people who go into sudden cardiac arrest survive, making it the nation's top killer.

Lurie helped develop ResQPOD and is at the forefront of a national initiative aiming to increase the survival rate through a four-step approach.

"When CPR is being performed with a pair of hands, it's pretty inefficient," said Lurie, who has been helping to develop CPR technologies for the past 20 years.

ResQPOD regulates when to put air in the lungs during CPR. It's a one-way valve that includes a timer that blinks when a patient is to receive ventilation. This builds up more negative pressure in the chest cavity, which allows more blood to flow to the heart and brain during CPR, rendering it more effective.

Test site

St. Cloud is among three communities selected to participate in a national program that includes incorporating ResQPOD in resuscitation efforts. The program called "Take Heart St. Cloud" also involves bystander CPR, defibrillation and induced hypothermia followed by an implanted defibrillator.

"We believe if we put these four initiatives in place, we can raise the survival rate by 25 percent," said Janet Steinkamp, program development specialist with Take Heart St. Cloud. "So it means we're saving lives."

The first and only St. Cloud resident to receive it benefited from all four Take Heart components March 27.

Local results will be tracked through 2008 and compared with outcomes in Austin, Texas and Columbus, Ohio, with the goal to create an international model for reducing deaths from cardiac arrest outside of hospitals.

CentraCare Health Foundation donated \$75,000 to start Take Heart St. Cloud. Medtronic and St. Jude Medical contributed \$100,000 and \$50,000, respectively.

Survival

Advanced Circulatory Systems Inc. in Eden Prairie first produced ResQPODs in 1996, but began manufacturing it in its current form in 2003 after receiving approval from the Food and Drug Administration, said Jim Flom, sales manager for Advanced Circulatory.

ResQPODs are used at more than 100 hospitals and EMS departments in Minnesota, and in about 1,000 cities in most states nationwide.

Dawn Blake and her husband, Mike, never saw any warning signs. Before going into sudden cardiac arrest, Dawn Blake did not have high



Times photo by Jason Wachter, jwachter@stcloudtimes.com Robert Johnson, executive director of the Central Minnesota Heart Center at St. Cloud Hospital, holds a ResQPOD on Monday at the hospital. The ResQPOD regulates when to put air in the lungs during CPR.

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blood pressure, high cholesterol or previous heart problems.

Given the statistics, it could have ended differently, Mike Blake said.

"I believe that the ResQPOD had a huge impact on my survival," Dawn Blake said. "Had I not had that device, I would not be here."

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