

## A miracle of timing and teamwork

Emergency medicine and cardiology teams save UF professor's life through 'seamlessly integrated,' extraordinary care

On Aug. 31, Stephen Pearton, Ph.D., a University of Florida professor, collapsed in the Reitz Union on the UF campus as he was waiting to meet his wife for lunch.

When Pearton collapsed, two UF students immediately started CPR and called 911. When University Police Department officers arrived, they used an automatic external defibrillator in an attempt to revive Pearton.

When Pearton, 54, arrived at the Shands Critical Care Center at UF, paramedics were still administering CPR. The Emergency Department team used several defibrillator shocks along with constant CPR and a series of medications. After nearly 20 minutes, Pearton regained spontaneous circulation and was able to receive an EKG.

"It was a team effort, and everyone did the right things the right way," said Lars K. Beattie, M.D., UF College of Medicine emergency medicine physician who was attending in the ED that day.

The EKG revealed that Pearton was having an ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), or heart attack. Once stabilized, he was transferred to the Cardiac Catheterization Lab where the team, headed by R. David Anderson, M.D., UF College of Medicine cardiologist, discovered his front artery was blocked. Pearton received three stents to keep the blood vessel open.

"This was a remarkable coordination of care, from the students at the Reitz Union to the UPD officers, to the EMS workers to the emergency department staff who treated him, to the Cath Lab team," Anderson said. "It was a complex intervention and a seamless integration between our emergency medicine and cardiology teams."

After spending five days at Shands at UF, including time in the Cardiac Intensive

Care Unit, Pearton went home and today he is doing well. He was able to attend the UF versus the University of Alabama at Birmingham home football game with his 12-year-old son, Max just 10 days after his heart attack.

"I am very thankful to the UF doctors and staff at Shands who saved my life with their skill and quick thinking," Pearton said. "If the heart attack had happened at a different location, I would not be alive. The combination of the chest compressions administered by the students at the Reitz Union, the work of the EMS crew and the amazing skill of the doctors and nurses at Shands to place the three stents in my arteries saved my life."

Both Beattie and Anderson applaud public education about CPR.

"This is a testimony to the decades of study and treatment of heart disease that have gone on in an effort to educate people about what to do in these situations," Anderson said. "The students were in the right place at the right time in this case, and they knew what to do. Their efforts allowed for the downstream treatment Dr. Pearton received, and the system worked flawlessly."

Beattie added, "Situations like this one crystallize all of the training we've gone through. This is what it's all about." N&N

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Pearton and his 12-year-old son, Max, at a recent UF football game.

