

In the right place at the right time: MPS clinical consultants help save a US veteran's life

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On the morning of April 13, Marty Viegas and Gretchen Stetson, two MPS vascular access clinical consultants, were sipping coffee in the cafeteria of the Brooklyn Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital going over the day's schedule.

Suddenly, from a couple of booths away, came a cry for help. An elderly vet had passed out and was slumped over the table. Marty and Gretchen ran over to assess the situation and found the man unresponsive, drenched in cold sweat and with no detectable pulse.

In an instant, the years of experience and training these two nurses-turned-clinical consultants had under their belts kicked in. Without wasting a second, they moved the unconscious man to the floor, began administering CPR, and called for someone to get a defibrillator (AED).

The next several minutes seemed like a lifetime as they switched between chest compressions and ventilations. When the AED finally arrived, Gretchen turned it on and Marty applied the pads to the patient's chest. The AED advised the patient needed to be shocked, so they cleared everyone and delivered the first shock. Then CPR again for two minutes, according to the ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support) protocol, followed by an assessment of the patient's heart rhythm. Another shock was needed, and more CPR.

Then they heard a moan and a cough. The patient had regained a pulse.

This dramatic rescue story had a happy end. The patient was taken to the Emergency Department (ED) at the hospital where he was stabilized and later transferred to another facility for further treatment.

The rescuers, too, experienced something that will leave a lasting impression. Soon after the patient was whisked away to the ED, Marty and Gretchen received an ovation from the people who witnessed their valiant efforts. Several vets come over to thank them for the excellent job they did.

That morning, BD advanced the world of health in a fundamental way. Our people faced a critical challenge, stepped in without hesitation, kept their cool, and helped save a human life.

In the photo: Marty Viegas and Gretchen Stetson