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## Wallis Annenberg HEART Program Launches in Los Angeles County

February 16, 2005

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Los Angeles, CA: The Annenberg Foundation generously donated \$3 million dollars to provide a new paramedic-based 12-lead system for assessing people with symptoms of heart attacks. The Wallis Annenberg HEART Program will speed and improve the heart attack diagnosis and treatment of Los Angeles area residents. The program involves an unprecedented partnership between the Los Angeles County and Los Angeles City Fire Departments and the American Heart Association.

This event took place on February 16, 2005, at the Los Angeles County Fire Department Training Center. On hand to launch this life-saving program were Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn; Wallis Annenberg, Vice-President of The Annenberg Foundation; Zev Yaroslavsky, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; Franklin Pratt, M.D., Medical Director and Fire Chief P. Michael Freeman of the Los Angeles County Fire Department; Marc Eckstein, M.D., Medical Director and Fire Chief William Bammatre of the Los Angeles Fire Department; American Heart Association Board Members Ismael Nuno, MD, Thomas Pfeffer, MD, and David L. Ross as well as members of the news media.

More than 7 million people, about 80% of all Los Angeles County residents, count on Los Angeles City and County Fire Department Emergency Medical Services personnel (paramedics) as the first responders for emergencies. Of the approximately 650 daily calls, nearly 20% are related to cardiac chest pain alone. Previously



l-r: LA County Deputy Fire Chief Jesus Burciaga; Fire Chief William Bammatre; Marc Eckstein, M.D.; Franklin Pratt, M.D.; Mayor James Hahn

only available in hospitals, the 12-lead EKG is estimated to save many lives each year by allowing paramedics in the field to determine in *two minutes* whether the patient is experiencing an acute heart attack.

Elements of the Wallis Annenberg HEART Program for Los Angeles include:

- Conversion of more than 160 paramedic units to 12-lead EKG
- Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) training and equipment of 1,450 paramedics from the Los Angeles County and Los Angeles City Fire Departments
- Tracking and analysis of data collected during program implementation
- Based on the outcome of program implementation, development of a recommended national model for other major metropolitan areas to follow.

To find out more about the Program, call the American Heart Association at 1-800-AHA-USA1 or log on at [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org).

### Project Timeline

#### 2004

Aug	Annenberg Funding
Sept	LA County Upgrade
Nov	LA City Upgrade

#### 2005

June	LA County Training Completed
July	Full implementation City and County
Dec	LA City Training Completed Research completed

#### 2006

June	Research published
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## Chain of Survival in Los Angeles County

Time is of the essence when it comes to emergency medical services. What are the patient's chances of survival once the paramedics have arrived? The August 2003 New England Journal of Medicine supports the fact that health care organizations have a responsibility to address the needs of the community when it comes to saving the lives of those who have been struck by heart disease and stroke, while also improving quality of life for those who have survived.

What is the "Chain of Survival" in Los Angeles County? Once paramedics arrive on the scene they use their training, experience and equipment to save lives. Yet 125,000 patients suffering from acute cardiac chest pain die "in the field" before receiving medical care. The patients who die from heart attacks generally die within one hour from the onset of symptoms and sometimes before they arrive at the hospital.

The Chain of Survival begins with the paramedics. By providing them with state of the art equipment, we provide them with the ability to reduce heart attack-related deaths in the field. By performing pre-hospital EKG's, paramedics can determine the patient's medical condition immediately. The Chain of Survival continues when paramedics transport their patients.

By viewing the EKG in the field, patients who are actually having a heart attack will show a variance on their electrocardiogram. Utilizing the cardiac units – which up until now have only been available in hospitals – will allow paramedics faster diagnosis and care. The final step in the Chain of Survival is the ability of the paramedic to forward data from the EKG to the emergency care physician on call. The physician can determine the best facility for the patient and, upon arrival at the facility, the physician has a head start in establishing patient care. Time and lives are saved if the patient care facility and paramedics in the field have the proper equipment and a rapid and consistent line of communication.

## On the Record

The three doctors in the following Q & A are key players and strategists in the quest for 12-lead EKG machines in Los Angeles County. They proved to be a source of invaluable information when it comes to the basic heart health of Americans. The following are just a few of the questions they answered.

### **Q: What do you think about Wallis Annenberg donating this money?**

*A: "The donation from the Wallis Annenberg Foundation is extremely generous. Her faith in our ability to make life better for residents of the greater Los Angeles area is humbling. The groundwork has been laid for one of the most comprehensive programs in the world to improve cardiovascular health."*

- Dr. Frank Pratt

### **Q: How will the 12 lead EKG machines benefit the patient?**

*A: "Patients suffering from an acute heart attack will now be able to have their condition accurately diagnosed in the field by the paramedics. This will enable the paramedics to transport these patients directly to centers to perform angioplasty to open up the blocked coronary arteries and minimize any permanent damage to the heart."*

- Dr. Marc Eckstein

### **Q: What impact will the 12 lead EKG machines have on Los Angeles County?**

*A: "The data from the project will allow us to look at our system, and move forward at refining the design of the system. Los Angeles County residents can be assured that this program will deliver better cardiac care in the field, which will lead to better care when they arrive at the hospital."*

- Dr. William Koenig

Quick diagnosis +

## LAFD's new 12-lead EKG Monitor Instrumental in Leon Abrams' Survival

Leon Abrams, a 69-year-old retiree from Woodland Hills, really didn't think he was much in danger of suffering a heart attack. But he was mistaken.

"I felt I was a pretty healthy and fit individual," said Leon. "I worked out at the gym three days a week and had lost 18-lbs. over the past year through Weight Watchers." To complicate matters, Leon didn't seem to experience many of the usual symptoms experienced by heart attack patients. As he reflected on the days prior to his heart attack in February 2004, he did recall a few episodes of very mild chest pains, but they did not appear to be severe enough, he thought, to concern him about any relation to possible cardiac distress.

It wasn't until one afternoon in February 2004, while making a telephone call from home, he began to experience very severe pounding on the right side of his chest, shortness of breath and lightheadedness. But, being a practical man, he didn't want to lose his place on hold, so he waited until he completed his call and then immediately called for his wife, Carole. Suddenly he couldn't breathe. Although in shock, but without hesitation, Carole called 9-1-1, and the paramedics and fire trucks were at their home within approximately three minutes. "The fire station is only a couple miles from our house," explained Leon.

"It never occurred to me that he was having a heart attack," said Carole. But after the paramedics arrived and began working on him, the realization set in."

The Los Angeles Fire Department paramedics used the new Lifepak 12-lead EKG monitor, acquired through a grant from the Annenberg Foundation. This machine, said firefighter-paramedic Tom Stafford who treated Leon, allows paramedics to diagnose a midocardic infraction Myocardial Infarction, or heart attack, and electronically transmit the visuals and information to the hospital. "The 12-lead has more angles to better identify problems and gives different views of the heart. It is a more accurate analysis of a heart attack than was available using the older three-lead electrocardiogram machine."

With his heart attack information already on its way to the cardiologists at his local medical center, the medical professionals there were prepared to begin the procedures to save Leon's life just as soon as he reached the

hospital, thanks to the paramedics' use of the Lifepak monitor.

Further examination and an angiogram at the hospital revealed a blockage that Leon's doctors were able to remedy via an angioplasty stent procedure. "I was only hospitalized for three days," said Leon, "but felt very weak when I got home." A normally active person, he was anxious to regain his strength upon returning home, and did so by first taking walks around his house. In the beginning, he was afraid of leaving the house for fear of experiencing another heart attack. "I finally was able to leave," explained Leon, "but I wouldn't go very far away, especially on a long trip or vacation."

By the time three months had passed, Leon's fear of leaving home was gone, and he was back at the gym for his three-day a week workouts. He thought he had a pretty healthy diet prior to his heart attack, but his doctor recommends he cut down on fats, which he has. "I still have an occasional hot dog or hamburger, but not very often," he added.

Since Leon previously found success at losing weight through Weight Watchers, he plans to rejoin the program with some friends, with the aim of again reaching and maintaining his goal. Having a family history of heart disease from both his parents, Leon is now more aware of the importance of maintaining good health and a healthy heart.

In 1996 Leon retired as the owner of an automotive supply company and found a new occupation as a movie extra. "My former work was extremely stressful," said Leon, "but this is not. Leon has appeared in hundreds of films and enjoys being part of the background. His assignments range in frequency from two to three times a week to once every three weeks. Scenes are shot all around the Los Angeles basin-from Downtown Los Angeles to San Pedro to Canyon Country. "He's yet to have a shoot here in Woodland Hills," explained Carole.

To assure he is on the right track as a heart attack survivor, Leon is examined by his cardiologist every three months and has a complete physical, including a treadmill test once a year.

*We'll be watching the movies for survivor Leon Abrams.*



### Those First Precious Minutes Count!

Los Angeles Fire Department Paramedic/Firefighter Tom Stafford attributes much of Leon Abrams' survivor status to the fact that Mrs. Abrams immediately called 9-1-1 and the paramedics were able to employ the department's state-of-the-art 12-lead ECG/EKG monitor. "The first 24-hours are critical to survival for cardiac patients," said Stafford, from Platoon A, Station 84 of the Los Angeles Fire Department.

In Leon's case, Stafford said there were normal signs of myocardial infarction, or heart attack. Leon complained of chest pains and his skin was cool and moist. "Those were classic symptoms," said Stafford. The monitor indicated that Leon had an elevated ST segment, pointing to possible acute infarction.

During the approximately five to seven minute ride to the hospital, Stafford was able to electronically transfer vital information on Leon's cardiac distress directly to the doctors who were preparing to treat him. "Mr. Abrams was a very cooperative patient and a nice gentleman," said Stafford. "I am glad to see the process got him where he needed to be in order to be a survivor, and that we had the means obtain the most appropriate help for him."

The 12-Lead ECG/EKG monitors replaced the three and four-lead EKG monitors the LAFD paramedics previously used. A partnership of the American Heart Association and the Los Angeles County and City Fire Departments, allows paramedics to be trained to use the Lifepaks, through a program from the Wallis Annenberg-Heart Foundation.

Los Angeles area paramedics receive approximately 650 emergency calls per day, and 20 percent of those calls are usually due to chest pain. For patients like Leon Abrams, the Lifepak proves to be a real lifesaver.

Targeted treatment = Lives Saved

# Wallis Annenberg

As Vice President of the Annenberg Foundation, Wallis Annenberg has been a strong supporter of organizations that enhance the community through the arts, culture and education. The Annenberg Foundation strongly believes that lasting changes and improvements in the quality of people's lives can only occur through innovative approaches and partnerships that address the needs of the whole person. Their work is designed to encourage and support these approaches, creating a dynamic template that can become a guide to similar initiatives in cities nationwide.

"I believe it's important to support the community and give of oneself to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others," said Annenberg. "I know from experience that offering support and getting involved in positive change is very fulfilling."

In the 15 years since its inception, the Foundation has made 5,065 grants totaling more than \$2.5 billion, including some of the largest and boldest in the history of philanthropy in the United States. The Foundation Center ranks the Annenberg Foundation 13th in terms of giving (\$192 million in grants in 2003) and 16th in assets (\$2.7 billion as of June 30, 2003).

Over the years, as much as possible, the Foundation has taken a "big tent" strategy and encouraged grant recipients to do the same. Engaging the public and private sectors to work collaboratively and enlisting local allies to share responsibility and help surmount obstacles enhances the prospects for success. In its grant making, the Foundation looks for evidence of one unique and very special quality: leadership that is innovative and inspired.

Executive Director Gail C. Levin leads the staff at the Foundation's headquarters in Radnor, Pennsylvania, and Wallis Annenberg oversees the Los Angeles office with the assistance of Leonard Aube, Managing Director.



For information about the American Heart Association, call 1 (800) AHA-USA1 or visit [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org).

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