



American Heart Association®  
**Mission:Lifeline®**

## **Don't Waste Time When Your Life is on the Line American Heart Association Mission: Lifeline Wyoming Aims to Save Lives**

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In 2010, Dianne Kirkbride of Cheyenne was babysitting her grandchildren when she first felt pain in her chest. Although alarmed, the pain subsided quickly, and she brushed off what she now knows was a serious warning. A visit to her doctor's office two days later revealed that Kirkbride had a 98 percent blockage in her heart. "Looking back on the incident, I wish I had listened to my body and chosen to go to the hospital much sooner," she said.

Kirkbride wasn't aware of the many heart attack symptoms, and she didn't realize that the symptoms could differ greatly for men and women. Kirkbride's heart attack came as a surprise, but she hopes that her experience will help others recognize the signs and take action. "If there's any message I can send to other women, it's this: learn more about the heart attack symptoms women are likely to experience, and then listen to what your body is telling you."

Unfortunately, Kirkbride's story is not unusual. Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of women in the United States. It's also the leading cause of death in Wyoming, due in part to the state's rural landscape and sparse healthcare resources. In 2012, Mission: Lifeline Wyoming was launched to provide the highest level of heart attack care to all Wyomingites and to increase the odds of survival.

The first phase of the American Heart Association (AHA) initiative centered on streamlining the system of care - the connection of EMS, first responders, hospitals and health care providers that each play a critical role in heart attack treatment. To date, participants include 36 hospitals and clinics, and 56 EMS agencies and first responders that benefit from new equipment, specialized training and coordinated protocols. So far the AHA has invested approximately \$3 million in new and upgraded equipment by outfitting nearly 200 ambulances with mobile 12-lead electrocardiograms (EKG). Modern EKG technology can now transmit patient data while en route. This saves precious time by allowing doctors to prepare to treat or transport the patient before arrival at the hospital.

Phase two is focused on raising awareness of both the signs and symptoms of a heart attack, as well as the importance of immediately dialing 9-1-1. A recent AHA-funded survey revealed one in seven Wyomingites couldn't name any signs of a heart attack. Further, only 52 percent of adults said they would call 9-1-1 first if they suspected a heart attack. A series of public service announcements, radio spots and educational materials featuring Kirkbride and other local survivors, is currently in wide distribution across the state to help raise those awareness levels.

The \$7.1 million program is funded through a \$5.9 million grant from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust with additional funding from First Interstate Bank and the Wyoming Community Foundation's Working for Wyoming Fund. Since 2010, the American Heart Association and the Helmsley Charitable Trust have launched similar Mission: Lifeline projects in Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

### **Know these heart attack symptoms:**

- **Chest pain**
- **Pain or discomfort in one or both arms**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Nausea or vomiting**
- **Back or jaw pain**