

Save Story



The impact of RQI — medical assistant finds peace and comfort amid difficult time

Megan Hayes, a former medical assistant at MaineHealth Franklin Health Center in Farmington, Maine, experienced the unimaginable on an October night nearly four years ago. Her mother went into sudden cardiac arrest. Here, Hayes shares her story and how an unlikely source brought her a sense of calm and reassurance during a trying time.

“On October 17, 2021, my 64-year-old mother went into sudden cardiac arrest on my porch of the apartment we shared and passed away. **I was a new medical assistant and had never performed CPR. In that moment, I acted as quickly as I could. I started CPR immediately, and due to it being 11:20 at night, I did compressions for more than eight minutes alone.**

As you can imagine, the trauma from the night lives within me. For months, I questioned if I would ever be able to return to healthcare. I took three months off from work to treat my PTSD and get myself to a healthy place.

Upon returning to work, my biggest fear was when I was due for Basic Life Support training. I didn't know if I would be able to do it. I knew that eventually I would have to, and that I would have to relive the worst night of my life.

I was terrified I would realize that I had done CPR on my mother incorrectly; I had already convinced myself. I carried that guilt on my shoulders for months, always feeling that if I only had done CPR prior to that night, maybe I could have saved her life, or if I had recently completed training. **I went over every single detail, every compression, everything I had done every day for six months. No matter how much I analyzed my actions, nothing or no one could give me the feedback I needed to finally be at peace. To know that I did everything I could.**

The day that I went to RQI® training, I went with my close friend from work, as she knew I would need

support. I shook the entire car ride — terrified I would break down in front of all my peers. The moment I walked in, I felt shortness of breath, and suddenly, I was back in the moment of watching my mom die. I watched everyone take their turn doing compressions and made the decision I would only watch. I did not want to face the fact that maybe I had done CPR poorly and that it contributed to my mom dying. After talking with my friend and telling her my story, I felt comfortable enough to try and finally felt ready to face it — and to know.

When I started compressions, I could only feel the emotions of that night. I felt it in my body, and suddenly it was dark. I was on my porch fighting to save my mom's life. **When I was done and saw that I had scored 99%, I felt weightless. I immediately started to cry. They were tears of relief.** I finally knew after months of torture that I did in fact do everything I could to save my mom. I gave her the best shot at life I could. **RQI gave me the greatest gift I have ever been given. It gave me peace.** It also made me understand the importance of this training, as building muscle memory and having feedback during CPR training will save thousands of lives.

There will always be a first time. It may be in a hospital, or it might just be on your very own porch. **I will never forget my experience and will always be eternally grateful for RQI. Thank you for all you do!**”

This story was shared via email with RQI Partners, with permission granted from Ms. Hayes to reprint for internal and external communications activations.