



LAY STAKEHOLDERS IN SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

SPRING 2025 - ISSUE 16

Lay Stakeholders in Action MAKING AN IMPACT



Congratulations to Lay Stakeholders **Mercedes Cruz-Ruiz, CHWI** and **Heather Baker, EdD** for their work and authorship of the *2025 Guidelines Publications on Acute Coronary Syndrome!*

2025 ACC/AHA/ACEP/NAEMSP/SCAI Guideline for the Management of Patients With Acute Coronary Syndromes: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Joint Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines

This month Dr. Heather Baker, EdD patient representative told her story to AHA Staff and the impact it had on her.

AFIB GUIDELINES VIDEO COMPLETED **Atrial Fibrillation Guidelines: What You Need To Know**

Atrial Fibrillation Guidelines: What You Need to Know offers essential information for patients and their families about atrial fibrillation (AFib)—including current treatment guidelines, risk management strategies, and the role of lifestyle choices in long-term care.

Developed with insights from both clinical experts and patients, this resource highlights how the latest AFib guidelines support shared decision-making between patients and their healthcare providers. The goal: to empower individuals to co-create care plans that reflect their unique needs, values, and daily lives.

[View the Video](#)

"As a school principal with published research regarding cardiac emergency preparedness in schools, I have volunteered alongside the AHA's Midwest Advocacy team to help pass a law in Illinois that requires cardiac emergency response plans in all schools, and will be working hard to pass this law in other states as well.

It was an honor to speak to the AHA Science and Research staff. As a sudden cardiac arrest survivor, I have personally been impacted by the research funded by and the guidelines published by the AHA, through my own personal medical care. Having a son with a congenital heart defect, I have watched medical decisions for him be guided by the AHA's guidelines. As a Survivor and school principal whose SCA happened at school, I advocate for cardiac emergency response plans, CPR/AED training in schools and communities, and better ways to screen for cardiac conditions. The science published by this department is critical for moving towards being a society in which individuals no longer needlessly die from sudden cardiac arrest and other heart conditions: a society in which everyone is prepared to respond to a cardiac emergency.

My goal in speaking to this group was for my story to serve as a reminder that their hard work, research, and publications determine the fate of people like me and my son all over the world. Again, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to share my story and to hopefully inspire the team!"

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We're proud to share that both **Heather Baker** and **Tania Saiz**, a valued member of our Lay Stakeholder Task Force, have been named to the **2025 Go Red for Women Class of Survivors**. This national honor celebrates women who use their stories of heart disease and stroke to inspire, advocate, and create change. Join us in congratulating these two incredible leaders!

ACKNOWLEDGING SERVICE PEER REVIEW

LAY PEER REVIEWERS- Frank Amend, Patrick Gee, Leslye deRoos, Tiffani, Maximilien Weiss

ESTABLISHED INVESTIGATOR AWARD Supports established investigators in rapid career growth phase, with records of accomplishments and showing extraordinary promise. Candidates will have a demonstrated commitment to cardiovascular or cerebrovascular science disciplines that support the AHA's mission, as indicated by funding and publication history and scientific accomplishments. Candidates should propose an innovative/novel research direction that challenges existing paradigms and employs novel concepts, approaches, or technologies.

LAY PEER REVIEWERS- Jim Bischoff, Shirley Yoshida

MERIT - Funds investigators with stellar track records of accomplishment, demonstrated by federal or equivalent funding from multiple sources and excellent publication records with substantial impact, who have the potential to move a field of science forward with creative approaches that are aligned with the AHA's mission.

LAY PEER REVIEWERS- Stacy Ann Walker, Lori Byrd, Erin Beckemeier, William "Bill" Bryant, Brandi Gandy

COLLABORATIVE SCIENCES - Fosters innovative collaborative approaches to research projects that propose novel pairings of investigators from at least two broadly disparate disciplines. The proposal must focus on the collaborative relationship, such that the scientific objectives cannot be achieved without the efforts of at least two co-principal investigators and their respective disciplines.

LAY PEER REVIEWERS- Julie Partridge, Kimberly Goodloe, Katie Moegenberg, Beth Green, Bernadette Jay

SFRN CARDIOVASCULAR KIDNEY METABOLIC SYNDROME: HETEROGENEITY IN WOMEN

This initiative will support a collaborative network of researchers whose collective efforts will address critical questions and stimulate significant advances in our understanding of Cardiovascular Kidney Metabolic (CKM) Syndrome in women and the related contributing factors. CKM Syndrome is a health disorder due of connections among heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes and obesity. Health outcomes are poor and affect multiple organ systems, and the considerable heterogeneity seen in CKM is not well understood. Outcomes from the SFRN should facilitate improved approaches for both prevention and treatment of CKM.

LAY PEER REVIEWERS- Mario Browne, Tiffany Indarjit, Darin Cecil, Landria Miales

RESEARCH SUPPLEMENT

To enable current AHA awardees to identify and serve as mentors for predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows from underrepresented groups in science and medicine

LAY PEER REVIEWERS- Craig Beam, Bernie Dennis

NOVEL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE APPROACHES TO ADVANCE CARDIOVASCULAR AND CEREBROVASCULAR/BRAIN HEALTH (June 2025)

A total of \$12 million is available to fund three investigators / investigative teams proposing novel uses of Artificial Intelligence to revolutionize cardiovascular and cerebrovascular / brain health and health care delivery.



INTERNATIONAL STROKE CONFERENCE

Many thanks to **Joni Byron** for attending and representing the AHA Lay Stakeholders in Science and Research.

Lay Stakeholder Participation at Scientific Sessions 2025
Details coming soon—stay tuned for updates!



Program Overview

As a significant funder and leader in research, we can and should leverage the perspectives of patients and people with lived experience (PWLE) across the research process. A key opportunity to do so is to incorporate patients and PWLE in the dissemination of research through ISC.



To pilot this effort, we hosted 10 mostly local stroke survivors and family members to ISC for a curated, one-day program on February 5.

Want to join us? Please contact Elizabeth.Cooper@heart.org or Angela.McCarty@heart.org