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## Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association Says Deaths of Three Detroit Marathon Runners Underscore Need for More Public Awareness

Washington, DC, (October 19, 2009) – The tragic deaths of three runners in Sunday's Detroit Marathon underscore how frequently and indiscriminately sudden cardiac arrest strikes Americans, the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association said today.

"Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) can happen any time and anywhere, even impacting seemingly healthy athletes, young adults, and those without any known signs of heart disease," said Dr. Vince Mosesso, medical director for the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association (SCAA). "Our sympathies are extended to the families of the three Detroit runners, and we will defer to the local medical examiner for conclusive reports on the cause of death, but the collapse of three runners in one race only heightens the importance of greater public education and awareness about sudden cardiac arrest."

Mosesso said that nearly 300,000 U.S. deaths are attributed to SCA each year, resulting in the collapse of an American about once every two minutes. While early bystander and immediate CPR and AED use have been shown to significantly improve survival, still many SCA victims do not receive treatment fast enough and the overall survival rate remains tragically low at eight percent. He urged the public to remember these basic facts about sudden cardiac arrest:

- SCA is different than a heart attack, and involves an electrical disruption of the heart that results in a very rapid but extremely weak heart beat, prohibiting the heart from circulating blood and oxygen to the body (as compared to a pumping malfunction from a blocked artery that is often the cause of a heart attack)
- SCA requires immediate CPR and often the shock of a defibrillator to restore the heart's natural rhythm
- A previous heart attack, coronary artery disease and a family history of sudden death or unexplained syncope (fainting) are among the risk factors that should always be shared with a personal physician, as well as other risk factors such as obesity, smoking and diabetes
- Implanted cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs) provide round-the-clock protection for more than a million Americans identified as at risk of SCA.

The Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association is the nation's largest public advocacy organization exclusively dedicated to sudden cardiac arrest awareness and prevention. For more information, please visit www.suddencardiacarrest.org.

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