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DELTA FLIGHT ATTENDANT IS SAVED DURING FLIGHT

Bridgette McDonald, a 40-year-old on-duty flight attendant, was onboard Delta flight 2076 from Salt Lake City when her heart short-circuited during take-off and she slumped into her seat. The mother of two instantly became another victim of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).

"We had just passed 10,000 feet and they had just turned off the seatbelt sign when I passed out," said McDonald.

Immediately, two flight attendants, as well as two nurses who were passengers, came to Bridgette's aid. While the two nurses began cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), flight attendants reached for the Agilent Technologies Heartstream automatic external defibrillator (AED) that was installed in the first aid overhead compartment.

After two shocks, Bridgette's heart began beating again. The plane went back to Salt Lake City to land, where paramedics were dispatched to take Bridgette to the hospital. Bridgette's physicians are still looking to find what caused her to have a sudden cardiac arrest, and as a precaution, implanted a tiny defibrillator in her chest. Bridgette was released from the hospital a few days later and is doing well.

Bridgette, like many victims of sudden cardiac arrest, had no known heart problems before her flight, reinforcing the fact that sudden cardiac arrest can strike any one at any time in any place. For this reason, many airlines have made the commitment of installing automatic external defibrillators on board their aircraft, in case an event like this were to happen.

Approximately 1.7 million people fly daily, making airlines and airports some of the most densely populated places in the nation. The Federal Aviation Administration is studying the need to require AEDs on all flights.