

HEART HERO 2019: DR GIUSEPPE CIANCAMERLA

President of Conacuore Association

Nominated by Associazione Fondazione Italiana per il Cuore

“The promise we must make, and try to keep, for our hearts is to eliminate our own risk factors and improve our lifestyles.”

Conacuore, National Coordinator of Cardiopathic Voluntary Associations in Italy, was founded in 1997 with the objective of making CVD primary and secondary prevention in Italy more effective, particularly in terms of updating cardiologists and nurses, and fighting sudden death.

For primary prevention, our associations focus on blood pressure and cholesterol controls, dietary advice and lifestyle recommendations, and at the national level we partner with the Ministry of Health on initiatives to raise public awareness. For secondary prevention, we organize post-rehabilitation maintenance gym courses and outdoor sports activities. At the national level we collaborate with the Italian Heart Foundation on projects to improve adherence to therapy in infarcted patients, in particular for the treatment of dyslipidemia.

To keep young cardiologists and nurses who collaborate with our associations up to date, we organize a fundraising activity which allows us the funds to let them participate at the main cardiology congresses. These qualified staff then cascade their learnings via the initiatives of the individual associations aimed at the general public.

In terms of the fight against sudden death, our associations organize courses for students on resuscitation and use of defibrillators, as well as donating defibrillators. At the national level we supported the approval of the law that regulates defibrillator use outside hospitals and we are following the process to make them even more widely available. We also produced a series of educational videos on resuscitation available at www.conacuore.it, and a table with models of defibrillators approved by the FDA to assist appropriate selection.

But the true Heart Heroes are the volunteers of our associations, who dedicate time and resources to all our activities, and I am very proud to be the President of this network of associations. I have been working in cardiology hospital departments and I have been involved in volunteering for over 30 years. I am an ex-smoker (for 35 years) and I confess a need to lose a little weight!

As President of Conacuore, I will work to ensure that we involve more and more associations in our work because only by being united we will win. I believe that primary prevention is the main solution to the problem. Therefore, the promise we must make, and try to keep, for our hearts is to eliminate our own risk factors and improve our lifestyles.