

The Raven Maria Blanco Foundation

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*Protecting America's Dental Public
through*

☪ ☪ ☪ **The Six Links of Survival** ☪ ☪ ☪

Raven Maria Blanco died in 2007 while at her dentist for a routine check-up and cleaning. Sadly, Raven's tragedy was not an isolated incident. Over twenty patients, both children and adults, have died during dental treatment with four deaths occurring in 2010 alone. In many cases, the dental office was not prepared to properly respond to the medical emergency once a problem developed.

Following her death, a foundation, which bears Raven's name, was established by her family. In addition to various charitable works, the Raven Maria Blanco Foundation, Inc. (RMBF) seeks to educate dentists and the dental profession about the need to stay vigilant and be prepared for a medical emergency occurring during dental treatment.

RMBF has adopted the *Six Links of Survival* concept, developed by Drs. John Robinson and Chris Rothman of the *Institute of Medical Emergency Preparedness* as a simple model that allows dentists to easily and effectively prepare their offices.

The *Six Links of Survival* are:

- 1) Doctor training
- 2) Staff training
- 3) Mock drills
- 4) Medical emergency manual
- 5) Appropriate medical emergency equipment
- 6) Necessary medications

To assist dentists in their pursuit of preparing their dental offices for a medical emergency situation, the RMBF recommends that dentists commit themselves to The *Six Links of Survival* Pledge.

The Six Links of Survival Pledge

- 1) ***I understand*** that for a dental office to respond to appropriately to a medical emergency, the dentist must have sufficient training that is renewed on a regular basis to assure proficiency despite the infrequent nature of an emergency. To that end...
 - ***I pledge*** to maintain or exceed the requirements of Basic Life Support as determined by the American Heart Association. In addition, I pledge to

regularly take continuing education courses specifically on the management of medical emergencies. These courses shall include understanding the underlying physiology, identification and response to emergency situations a dentist is reasonably likely to encounter. These courses shall be taken on a frequency that assures the dentist is always proficient in all these areas.

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2) ***I understand*** that proper response to a medical emergency is truly a team effort involving not only the dentist, but every member of the staff. To that end...

- ***I pledge*** that all members of my dental team, either full or part time, shall maintain or exceed the requirements of Basic Life Support as determined by the American Heart Association. In addition, I pledge all members of my dental team, both full and part time, shall take continuing education courses on the management of medical emergencies which reasonably may occur in a dental office. These courses shall occur on a frequency that assures the dental team is always adequately prepared.

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3) ***I understand*** the infrequent and variable nature of medical emergencies in dental offices necessitate the dental team engage in ongoing practice to stay proficient in medical emergency management. To that end...

- ***I pledge*** to establish and perform an ongoing system of medical emergency mock drills conducted on a regular basis for the dentist and entire dental team.

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4) ***I understand*** the chaotic and frightening nature of a medical emergency in the dental office necessitates that a written plan be readily available to remind each respondent of their responsibilities and coach the dental team through the appropriate responses. To that end...

- ***I pledge*** to maintain a written emergency manual, easily accessible to the treatment area and in a location available to everyone that includes the specific assignments for each person on the dental team and algorithms to identify and respond to common medical emergencies.

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5) ***I understand*** that a well-equipped dental office includes the appropriate equipment to respond to an emergency and manage a patient until additional assistance arrives. To that end...

- ***I pledge*** to maintain the following medical emergency equipment and have an ongoing system to assure that it is always in good operating condition: (1) an AED, (2) a stethoscope and sphygmomanometer(s) with at least three sizes of cuffs, (3) oxygen equipment to provide supplemental oxygen to breathing patients needing assistance, (4) oxygen equipment to provide positive pressure oxygen to a non-breathing patient, (5) equipment to perform a cricothyrotomy on an obstructed patient, and (6) a glucose monitor with test strips.



6) ***I understand*** the immediate use of medications may be required by the patient before the arrival of EMS. To that end...

- ***I pledge*** to maintain (or exceed) the list of emergency medications as defined by the American Dental Association and have an ongoing system to assure that the medications are not outdated.