

For Immediate Release



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AUB collaboration puts the Good Samaritan Law **on national agenda**

The Vascular Medicine Program at the American University of Beirut (AUB) worked with the Lebanese Society of Cardiology (LSC) and the Lebanese Society of Emergency Medicine (LSEM) to organize a conference on ‘Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest: a medical, legal, and public challenge,’ on Saturday March 30, 2019 at the Lebanese Order of Physicians.

The conference achieved its targets to draft the proposal for the Lebanese Good Samaritan Law; develop a working plan to achieve mandatory training of high school students on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR); and propose a working scheme for Public Access Defibrillator Programs. This presents hope for health policy and regulatory changes that will lead to improving the survival rate from out of hospital cardiac arrest, which is currently less than 5% in Lebanon, compared to 30-50% in US and European countries.

Chairman of the Health Affairs Committee at the Lebanese Parliament, Dr. Assem Araji, and active member in the committee, Member of Parliament, Dr. Inaya Ezzedinne, promised their full support to pass the highly-needed laws. President of the Lebanese Order of Lawyers Andre Chidiac pledged “to put the resources of the order to serve this cause because of conviction in its value to the community at large.” Similarly, president of the Lebanese Order of Physicians, Dr. Raymond Sayegh, and representative of the Ministry of Public Health, Dr. Baheej Arbeed, concurred with the above and will be following with the team leading this effort to ensure that the final targets are achieved. Former Minister of Interior and Municipalities Ziyad Baroud highlighted the need for these changes, referring to an initiative that he had proposed earlier to train law enforcement members on CPR, which will complement these efforts. American Heart Association (AHA) representative, Zahra Al Hilali, commended the efforts and described the support that AHA will be providing for the group’s future plans. Moreover, representatives of the Red Cross and Civil Defense were aligned with the objectives of the meeting and acknowledged the need for these changes if the mortality burden is to be reduced at a national level.

The team leading these efforts—composed of Dr. Hussain Isma'eel, chair of the Guidelines Committee at LSC; Dr. Mazen ElSayed, president of LSEM; Dr. Samar Noureddine, AUB Nursing; Dr. Bernard Abi Saleh, Electrophysiology, AUB; and NGOs including the Remy Rebeiz Young Heart Foundation and YOHAN—will be following up with Me. Chidiac to finalize the draft of the Lebanese Good Samaritan Law equivalent to submit it to the Lebanese Parliament. In a parallel track and assisting this team, president of the LSC, Dr. Antione Sarkis, will be working hand in hand with the president-elect of the LSC, Dr. Malek Mohammad, to follow with the Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Education on developing a national campaign to raise awareness on how to improve survival from out of hospital cardiac arrest and developing the governmental decrees required for the CPR training of high school students and the development of public access defibrillator programs.

The meeting ended with a signature by participating official bodies of a symbolic pledge to assist in all efforts leading to reducing the mortality burden from out of hospital cardiac arrest. The plan for the subsequent steps was approved, with a following meeting to show concrete results and the aim to make Lebanon the first Arab country to pass a Good Samaritan Law equivalent.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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