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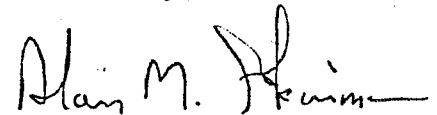
Dear Dr. Ornato,

The latest position statement on the treatment of near-drowning, which is intended for inclusion in the Standards for Basic Life Support published by the American Heart Association and the American Red Cross, accurately reflects my opinion on the proper pre-hospital management of this emergency.

As a Coast Guard flight surgeon who has participated in many rescues of salt-water, near drowning victims, I have not found excessive water in the lungs to be of sufficient magnitude to prevent adequate ventilation of the patient through normal Basic Life Support procedures. This is also the experience of other Coast Guard medical and rescue personnel who, of course, manage a relatively high number of near-drowning cases as part of the Coast Guard's search and rescue missions.

I strongly support the position statement as it presently reads, and I have significant concerns that initial use of an abdominal thrust will result in a reduction in the number of near-drowning patients who are currently successfully resuscitated through normal CPR procedures.

Sincerely,



Alan M. Steinman, M.D.  
CDR, USPHS/USCG