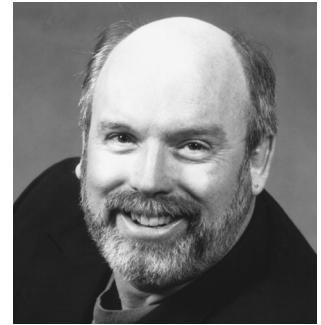


## Dan's Story

### Heart Attack Survivor

Daniel Williams – Bangor, Maine

Back in December of 2007, Dan Williams remembers just not feeling well. The 60-year-old is a sign language interpreter for the Bangor Interpreting Agency as well as a part-time massage therapist. After finishing up with a massage client at a friend's house he became nauseous, short of breath, and felt sweaty.



Not sure what was happening with his body, he went back to his friend's house to lie down when his friend insisted that she call 9-1-1 to get him help right away. Looking back, Williams believes that friend may very well have saved his life.

In 2–3 feet of snow, the paramedics arrived quickly. They performed a 12-lead electrocardiogram (EKG) right in the ambulance, which determined that he was having a severe type of heart attack. They also took a blood sugar reading of 399, which was shockingly high! Shortly after, Williams flat lined and was shocked back to life with a defibrillator.

Since the EKG was recorded before he arrived at the hospital, he could have a lifesaving procedure called an angioplasty to open up his blocked artery much sooner than if he had someone drive him to the hospital. He then had a stent inserted into the blocked artery to keep it open. This rapid treatment to reopen the blocked artery is vital because more heart muscle dies the longer it's deprived of blood flow.

After spending two days in the hospital, Williams was able to go home. Since then, Williams heeded his doctor's orders by improving his eating habits and walking every day. On his three-month checkup, he was surprised to learn he had sustained no heart damage.

Williams was obese at the time of his heart attack and has since lost 45 pounds and currently walks six miles each day. At 267 pounds, he still needs to lose more weight and has cut out red meat, as well as salty and fatty foods from his diet. His family history of heart disease included a diabetic father, a mother with heart issues, and an uncle that died of a massive heart attack at 54.

"I listen to my body now," says Williams, who shares his story at local events like the Northeastern Maine Heart Walk at Husson College. Dan hopes that by sharing his experience, he will help others to recognize the risks and signs of heart attack, and give them the same second chance at life that he has had. "Recognizing the signs, and calling 9-1-1 immediately is the best action that you can take in saving your life, or the life of someone you care about".