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Anesthesia Awareness Campaign Remains at the Heart of Founder and Patients

The Anesthesia Awareness Campaign, Inc. (www.anesthesiaawareness.com), a nonprofit patient advocacy organization, announced today that it is embarking on the second decade of its campaign aimed at working with victims, educating patients and medical professionals that anesthesia awareness continues to happen, and letting the public know how it can be prevented. Anesthesia awareness is the phenomenon of being mentally alert (and terrified) while supposedly under full general anesthesia. The patient is paralyzed, unable to speak, and totally helpless to communicate his/her awareness, a feeling often compared to being entombed in a corpse. The now widely used term "anesthesia awareness," can be largely attributed to the work of the Campaign.

Carol Wehrer, president/founder of The Anesthesia Awareness Campaign, Inc., has become a renowned lay expert on awareness worldwide. "The mission of our Campaign is to prevent patients (even one) from experiencing anesthesia awareness and its consequences through education, which leads to prevention by replacing ignorance or fear with knowledge, which leads to empowerment. I continue to be both saddened and inspired by the people I've met through my 11 years working on this campaign and look forward to continuing this important effort until awareness is a thing of the past."

Wehrer has appeared on international, national and local television and cable networks and radio, and her story has been shared through numerous print media outlets from the *Los Angeles Times* to the *Washington Post* to the *London Guardian*. She is also sought as a speaker at clinical anesthesia conferences ranging from speeches to the international Memory and Awareness in Anesthesia series in England and Germany to grand rounds lectures in hospitals and universities. She talks not only about her own experience with anesthesia awareness, but also the stories of the 4,000+ victims with whom she has spoken, and then shares ways to prevent awareness. Wehrer's work was published in the American Society of Anesthesiologists' *Newsletter*, and she has given significant input to the information intake form for the society's Awareness Database project, in addition to being the main recruiter for participants in the project.

Wehrer, herself amazed to be entering a second decade of work on all aspects of anesthesia awareness, reflects on what it takes to keep going for so long. "First, this should never happen to any human being again. Second, I believe awareness can be prevented by making everyone, including all anesthesia providers, aware of and accountable for their vigilance and proper use of all available technology. The public must also recognize the need to stay informed about their care options and speak honestly with their caregiver. Lastly, I believe this is my personal mission in life; my mandate with God's help, if you will."

More information about anesthesia awareness can be found on the Anesthesia Awareness Campaign web site at www.anesthesiaawareness.com. The Campaign urges patients who have experienced awareness to log on to the site and make phone or email contact, as it maintains the largest repository of anesthesia awareness victims in the world. Patients can also be added to the American Society of Anesthesiologists awareness registry by logging on to www.awaredb.org.

Ms. Wehrer is available for interviews, speeches, and other anesthesia awareness-related contacts, and always welcomes hearing from other victims. "I will continue to make everyone 'aware of awareness'."

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