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**Wendi McLendon-Covey,**

**Star of ABC’s Hit Comedy ‘The Goldbergs,’**

**featured in new Hands-Only CPR video from**

**the American Heart Association**

***Short film uses pop culture blunder to teach life-saving skill***

(DALLAS – June 13, 2017) – The American Heart Association (AHA), the world’s leading voluntary health organization devoted to fighting cardiovascular disease, teams up with actor-comedian **Wendi McLendon-Covey** to save lives. In a new [Hands-Only CPR training video](http://cpr.heart.org/AHAECC/CPRAndECC/Programs/HandsOnlyCPR/UCM_473196_Hands-Only-CPR.jsp), produced with the support of the Anthem Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Anthem Inc., McLendon-Covey makes certain viewers will always remember the two simple life-saving steps.

The project, titled “The Mix-Up,” is directed by Emmy-nominated screenwriter and filmmaker **Andy Tennant**, whose film credits include *Hitch* and *Sweet Home Alabama*. Academy Award™-nominated producer **James Keach,** whose film credits include *Walk the Line* and *I’ll Be Me* in conjunction with CK&D media, produced the spot. The video is an entertaining parody of recent award show mix-ups and is filled with clever, recognizable references to inform viewers about an important skill. Hands-Only CPR has two steps, performed in this order: when you see a teen or adult suddenly collapse, call 911. Then, push hard and fast in the center of the chest until help arrives.

“While the rather unfortunate mishap during this year’s major awards show [shockingly] didn’t result in cardiac arrest, if it had, we’d be prepared!” joked McLendon-Covey, who plays TV mom Beverly Goldberg in ABC’s hit sitcom, *The Goldbergs,* and will star in the upcoming political thriller *The Silent Man*. “But in all seriousness, we’re taking a memorable event in pop culture history, and using it to quite literally save lives. With Hands-Only CPR, I feel empowered to help a cardiac arrest victim if I’m ever put in this situation. I can’t believe how easy it was to learn, and now I know a life-saving skill—and you can too!”

More than 350,000 cardiac arrests occur outside of the hospital setting each year. Hands-Only CPR has been shown to be as effective as conventional CPR for cardiac arrest when it occurs at home, at work or in public. It can double or triple a victim’s chance of survival.

Additionally, approximately 70 percent of all out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur at home. Yet, the chances that a loved one will perform CPR on a person who has an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest at home decreases with the victim’s age, according to a recent study in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*. The study also shows that CPR training and knowledge is lower among older adults, who are more likely to experience a cardiac arrest outside a hospital.

“The study’s findings should serve as a call to action that we need to increase bystander CPR training that will instill confidence in people to act when somebody they love or know has a cardiac arrest,” said Benjamin S. Abella, MD Mphil, an American Heart Association clinical volunteer, the study’s senior author and director of Penn Medicine’s Center for Resuscitation Science. “The new AHA Hands-Only CPR video is an entertaining and creative way to capture the attention of Americans and teach an important skill that can save lives.”

Before directing the project, Tennant knew how to perform CPR. However, the importance of knowing the skill became even more significant after doctors diagnosed his college-aged son with a life-threatening heart condition two years ago. His son came down with what he thought was the flu during his mid-term exams, so he went to the campus medical center where staff treated him.

“They listened to his heart and realized that he was in quite serious cardiac distress and rushed him to the hospital. He was in the hospital for three weeks with an acute cardiomyopathy,” Tennant recalled. “They said he was incredibly close to cardiac arrest at 19.”

Doctors implanted a defibrillator in his son who is now doing well and continues to get treatment. Working on the AHA video was even more meaningful to Tennant in light of his son’s condition.

“The truth is, it's a fun entertaining way to get a very important message across, which is that people need to know CPR,” Tennant said of the video. “They need to know about Hands-Only CPR. I think just in my own experience if anything were to happen to my son I would hope to God that there was somebody close by who knows CPR.”

"In the U.S., there is a growing population of older adults who need to know the life-saving technique, but it's also important for their family members who often serve as their caregivers," said Craig Samitt, MD, chief clinical officer at Anthem, Inc. "We want to help bridge the gap in CPR training particularly for the older adult population as the median age of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is 65 years old. This video uses humor as a tool to engage people about a serious topic that impacts so many, but the takeaway will be memorable for all generations who learn this life-saving skill."

In 2009, the AHA launched a nationwide Hands-Only CPR campaign to raise awareness about this life-saving skill. The campaign is supported nationally by an educational grant from the Anthem Foundation. Since 2012, nearly 9.7 million people have been trained in Hands-Only CPR via events, Hands-Only CPR training kiosks and video education with the Foundation’s support.

The video is being released on AHA’s website, [www.heart.org/HandsOnlyCPR](http://www.heart.org/HandsOnlyCPR). To learn more about the Hands-Only CPR campaign and be prepared to save a life, visit [heart.org/handsonlycpr](http://www.heart.org/handsonlycpr) or [facebook.com/AHACPR](https://www.facebook.com/AHACPR).

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**About the American Heart Association**

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – the two leading causes of death in the world. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit heart.org or call any of our offices around the country. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

**About Anthem Foundation**

The Anthem Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Anthem, Inc. and through charitable contributions and programs, the Foundation promotes the inherent commitment of Anthem, Inc. to enhance the health and well-being of individuals and families in communities that Anthem, Inc. and its affiliated health plans serve. The Foundation focuses its funding on strategic initiatives that address and provide innovative solutions to health care challenges, as well as promoting the Healthy Generations Program, a multi-generational initiative that targets specific disease states and medical conditions. These disease states and medical conditions include: prenatal care in the first trimester, low birth weight babies, cardiac morbidity rates, long term activities that decrease obesity and increase physical activity, diabetes prevalence in adult populations, adult pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations and smoking cessation. The Foundation also coordinates the company’s year-round Associate Giving program which provides a 50 percent match of associates’ pledges, as well as its Volunteer Time Off and Dollars for Doers community service programs. To learn more about the Anthem Foundation, please visit <http://www.anthem.foundation> and its blog at <http://anthemfoundation.tumblr.com>.

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