

# STORY HIGHLIGHT

## CARISA BAMFORD'S STORY



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### Yes, patients matter, so do you.

I was working late yet again, wishing I was home with my husband and three little boys. I knew that this work schedule was not going to work for me and my family long term. Instead of being at home reading stories and giving baths, I was in the lab, crossmatching blood, running complete blood counts, plating petri dishes, and running liver enzymes. That's when a call came: **"Carisa, we need you in bay 4 for a stat lab draw."**

I went quickly to draw the patient's blood, ready to help. When I arrived, nurses were talking in a hush, some seemed to even have misty eyes. That's when **Doctor Brown** pulled me aside and said, *"this patient is 30 years old and experiencing what we think is an abdominal aortic aneurysm. We don't think she will make it"*. The ED was slammed, and other patients were vying for care, so everyone rushed off in a hurry as I left the nursing station.

I quickly gathered myself and knocked on the door. When I went inside, **I found a found Olivia shattered and crying**. I sat down and grabbed her hand. She looked up with tears streaming down her face and told me how scared she was to die. She told me she didn't think she'd get to say goodbye to her husband and three young children. She was all alone. In that moment, **I felt like I was looking in the mirror**. Olivia, the young mother and wife could have easily been me. Nurses and doctors outside the door were beside themselves with grief and heartache but had to keep working to care for the ED full of people who probably had a chance.

That's when I knew **I could not leave Olivia alone**. I ran the blood back to the lab and asked Steph, my co-worker for the night, to process everything while I went back to the ED. I stayed with Olivia for what seemed like hours, but on the clock showed it was less than 50 minutes, while we waited for her husband, children, and the helicopter to arrive. **I held her hand, listened to her stories, and was just simply there.**

As I left Olivia's room after they strapped her to the gurney and wheeled her away, the nurses and doctors hugged me and cried. *"We are so thankful that you could do everything for her. Especially the things we couldn't."* I hadn't felt like I had really done anything at all; I honestly felt hopeless the entire time. But as I walked out of the ED, went back to the lab, and eventually into my car to drive home to my family, I realized that while the tragedy of a young mother and wife losing her life too young was terrible, **another looming tragedy was that the nurses and doctors felt like they could not do what they knew was right; they didn't have time, they weren't truly empowered, and they felt hopeless when faced with being there for Olivia**. I knew then that while there might not be anything left to do for Olivia, *there was a lot that could be done for my comrades and co-workers*. I knew that we had to take better care of them to allow them to care for others.

That's why I now lead an entire team and movement around helping physicians, APPs, and nurses connect to their purpose and live their best day in medicine **EVERY. SINGLE. DAY.**