

## A Clipped Response

In the Emergency Department

**O**ne of my most memorable code blues occurred several years after I had started practicing full-time emergency medicine and was working in a small community hospital. We received a radio call that the ambulance was bringing in a man in full cardiac arrest. He collapsed while mowing his lawn during July, which is a very hot and humid time of year in St. Louis. He was in his sixties, obese, and had a history of hypertension. After he arrived, we continued resuscitation efforts but were unsuccessful.

I had the wife brought back to our quiet room and

explained to her that her husband was dead. She immediately replied, "Well, who is going to finish cutting the grass?"

I was completely stunned and did not know what to say. I offered to call a priest or pastor or family. I never did find out who finished cutting the grass. This was the most memorable response I have ever had in my 32 years of practice.

—Edward B. Morgan, Jr., MD, FACEP  
*St. Louis, MO*

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