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Dr Mayer earned his medical degree from Cornell University Medical College in New York City. He completed a residency in neurology and a fellowship in critical care neurology at the Neurological Institute of New York, Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center. He is board certified in neurology and neurocritical care, and was a founding member and is past-president of the Neurocritical Care Society.

Dr. Mayer has published more than 240 original research articles, 180 review articles, 340 abstracts, and written or edited eight books, including the most recent edition of Merritt's Textbook of Neurology, considered a standard text in the field. He was principal investigator of the FAST Trial, a worldwide multicenter clinical trial evaluating ultra-early hemostatic therapy for brain hemorrhage, and served as principal investigator of the NIH-funded New York Presbyterian Hospital hub of the Neurological Emergencies Treatment Trials (NETT) network and the Columbia University Outcomes Project. His work in helping victims of severe brain injury has been featured in the Wall Street Journal and the book *Cheating Death*, by CNN medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta.