Compliments of

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Dear Friend,

Strokes, or brain attacks, are a major cause of death and permanent disability. They occur when blood flow to a region of the brain is obstructed. Stroke is the third leading cause of death in America, claiming about 200,000 lives each year or one of every 15 deaths. About 750,000 Americans each year suffer a new or recurrent stroke. That means, on average, a stroke occurs every 45 seconds.

There are known stroke risk factors and warning signs. Learning about them and adjusting your lifestyle can reduce your risk. Education and prevention are steps toward a healthy, stroke-free life.

This guide provides basic concepts to reducing your risk of a stroke through lifestyle changes, knowing risk factors that cannot be changed, and learning the warning signs of stroke. It is also recommended that you speak with you doctor about your potential risk for a stroke.

For more information on legislative measures relating to health issues, please call one of my district offices at (209) 948-7479 or (209) 726-5465.

Sincerely,

Cathleen Galgiani
Assemblymember
17th Assembly District

STROKE

Don't ignore the risk factors; learn how to prevent stroke!

What should you know about stroke?

1. Reduce *your risk factors. The following are risk factors that can be treated, modified or controlled:*

- ***High blood pressure.*** This is the single most important treatable risk factor for stroke.
- ***High blood cholesterol.*** A high level of cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease, which raises your risk of stroke.
- ***Heart disease.*** Coronary heart disease or heart failure raises the chances of having a stroke.
- ***TIAs.*** Transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) are "mini strokes" that produce stroke-like symptoms but no lasting damage. Recognizing and treating TIAs will reduce your risk of stroke.
- ***Carotid artery disease.*** Carotid arteries in the neck supply blood to the brain. A carotid artery narrowed by fatty deposits may become blocked by a blood clot, resulting in a stroke.

2. Personal *choices you make each day can affect your risk factors. The following factors are up to you to change:*

- ***Tobacco use.*** The nicotine and carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke reduce the amount of oxygen in your blood and damage the walls of blood vessels, making clots more likely to form.
- ***Physical inactivity and obesity.*** Being inactive, obese, or both, can increase your risk of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease, all risk factors for stroke.
- ***Alcohol intake.*** Excessive alcohol intake can raise blood pressure levels in both men and women.
- ***Illegal drug use.*** Intravenous drug abuse carries a high risk of stroke. Cocaine use has been linked to stroke and may be fatal even in first-time users.

3. Some *risk factors cannot be changed:*

- ***Increasing age.*** The chance of having a stroke more than doubles for each decade of life after 55. While stroke is common among the elderly, a lot of people under 65 also have strokes.
- ***Gender.*** At most ages, stroke is more common in men than in women. However, women account for more than half of all stroke deaths.
- ***Heredity and race.*** Your risk of stroke is greater if a family member has had a stroke. African Americans have a higher risk of stroke.
- ***Prior Stroke.*** Someone who has had a stroke is more likely to have a stroke again.

Remember... Reduce the risk of stroke... Recognize the signs of stroke... Respond immediately to stroke

Help spread the news about stroke.

Stroke is the third highest cause of death among Americans and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability. A stroke or "brain attack" will occur when a blood vessel bursts or becomes clogged.

The first step to preventing a stroke is a visit with your doctor to assess your risk factors and learn how to treat them.

Learn the warning signs of stroke.

- Sudden **numbness or weakness** of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden **confusion,** trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden **trouble walking,** dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden **severe headache** with no known cause
- Sudden **trouble seeing** in one or both eyes

If you or someone with you has one of these signs, don't delay! Call 9-1-1 immediately, so an ambulance can be sent.

New Therapies

New treatment therapies for stroke have been proven effective, but every second counts. It is very important to record the time when the first symptoms appear. If given within three hours of the onset of symptoms, a clot-busting drug can reduce long-term disability from the most common type of stroke.

If you or a family member has suffered a stroke, there are many resources available to provide assistance on the road to recovery.

The American Stroke Association
1-888-4STROKE
(1-888-478-7653)
www.strokeassociation.org

The American Heart Association Stroke Connection Warmline
1-800-553-6321
http://www.americanheart.org

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
1-800-638-8255
1-800-498-2071
http://www.asha.org

The American Physical Therapy Association
1-800-999-2782
http://www.apta.org/

The Job Accommodation Network
1-800-526-7234
http://www.jan.wvu.edu/