



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, QUEEN'S MEDICAL CENTER AND AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION URGE EVERYONE TO LEARN THE WARNING SIGNS OF STROKE THROUGH NEW BUS SIGN CAMPAIGN *Governor proclaims May as Stroke Awareness Month*

HONOLULU – Gov. Neil Abercrombie has proclaimed May “Stroke Awareness Month in Hawaii” to urge residents to familiarize themselves with stroke risk factors, signs and symptoms, and take action at first sign of a stroke. The Governor’s proclamation honors American Stroke Month, which is traditionally held nationwide in May.

During this month, the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, The Queen’s Medical Center, and the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) are conducting an awareness campaign to help Hawaii residents recognize the warning signs of a stroke. Print advertisements are being displayed throughout the month of May in all Oahu buses. These ads teach the new F.A.S.T. acronym, which describes how to recognize a stroke and what to do immediately if one occurs.

“We want the people of Hawaii to know how to spot a stroke and to take immediate action because quick recognition and treatment can lessen the impact of having suffered a stroke and even save a life,” said Health Director Dr. Linda Rosen. “If you or your family is at risk for stroke, make learning and sharing the stroke warning signs a top priority.” Dr. Rosen is also a member of the Hawaii Stroke Task Force created by Senate Concurrent Resolution No.155 S.D. 1.

“Knowing if you are at risk for a stroke is extremely important, because there may be something you can do to lower your chances of having one,” said Lori Suan, executive director of the American Heart Association Hawaii Division. “High blood pressure is the No. 1 stroke risk factor. Check your blood pressure regularly and get it under control if needed. Talk to your doctor about healthy levels for you.”

Nearly 78 million Americans and 300,000 Hawaii residents have high blood pressure and many more are not aware that they have it. Stroke is a leading cause of serious long-term disability in the U.S. and the third leading cause of death in Hawaii, killing about 600 people in the state each year. Someone in the U.S. has a stroke every 40 seconds, yet 80 percent of strokes are preventable. More than three out of five adults in Hawaii cannot identify stroke warning signs or symptoms and the need to call 9-1-1.

F.A.S.T. was developed for the American Stroke Association's *Together to End Stroke* initiative and nationally sponsored by [Covidien](#). The print advertisements in 600 buses on Oahu will teach the following stroke warning signs and what to do if one recognizes these symptoms:

- **F - Face Drooping:** *Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile.*
- **A - Arm Weakness:** *Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?*
- **S - Speech Difficulty:** *Is speech slurred, are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence like, "The sky is blue." Is the sentence repeated correctly?*
- **T - Time to call 9-1-1:** *If the person shows any of these signs or symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and get them to the hospital immediately.*

Additional stroke signs include: sudden severe headache with no known cause; sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; or sudden confusion or trouble understanding.

Information and tools to help people to prevent, treat and beat stroke are available at StrokeAssociation.org/strokemonth. This includes a free risk assessment that helps individuals evaluate their personal stroke risk and work with their doctor to begin a prevention plan. *Together to End Stroke* also offers a free "Spot a Stroke F.A.S.T." mobile app for iOS and Android that includes the warning signs and a searchable map to find local hospitals recognized for heart and stroke care.

For more information about stroke or American Stroke Month activities, visit StrokeAssociation.org/strokemonth. Follow #StrokeMonth on Facebook and Twitter to add your voice to the conversation.

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