



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

BRUCE ANDERSON, Ph.D.
DIRECTOR

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Hawai'i Department of Health holds community health fair for Stroke Awareness Month in May

*Stroke is the third leading cause of death and number one cause of
chronic disability in Hawai'i.*

HONOLULU – In observance of National Stroke Awareness Month, the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) Developmental Disabilities Division's Neurotrauma Supports program is hosting a community health fair on Saturday, May 18 at Kahala Mall from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The health fair will offer stroke prevention tips and feature free blood pressure screenings by qualified medical personnel, information about strokes and risk factors, and offer resources for stroke survivors and their family members.

A stroke occurs when blood flow through an artery to the brain is cut off either by a blockage or because the artery ruptures and bleeds into the brain tissue. Strokes are serious medical emergencies and must be treated immediately.

"For every minute blood flow to the brain is blocked, 1.9 million brain cells die. This is the equivalent of your brain aging 3 weeks per minute or 3.6 years per hour. If you or a loved one has signs of a stroke, call 911 as soon as possible," said Wendie Lino, program specialist supervisor at the Developmental Disabilities Division.

Not sure if someone is having a stroke? Think "**F.A.S.T.**" because every second counts:

- **F – Face drooping.** Is one side of the person's face drooping or numb? When he or she smiles, is the smile uneven?
- **A – Arm weakness.** Is the person experiencing weakness or numbness in one arm? Have the person raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- **S – Speech difficulty.** Is the person's speech suddenly slurred or hard to understand? Is he or she unable to speak? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Can he or she repeat it back?
- **T – Time to call 911.** If any of these symptoms are present, dial 911 immediately. Check the time so you can report when the symptoms began.

"Recognizing the signs of a stroke and immediately calling 911 is important for reducing the chance of death or long-term disability," said Lino. "When you call 911, paramedics perform standard tests, and if they indicate a stroke, the paramedics will transport the patient to the nearest emergency room that is capable of treating that type of stroke. The paramedics will also activate the hospital stroke team prior to arrival, saving valuable time."

Living a healthy lifestyle, being physically active, eating more fruits and vegetables and foods low in sodium and salt, maintaining a healthy weight, and avoiding smoking can help to reduce the chances of having a stroke. Properly managing certain medical conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease and diabetes also can lower the risk of stroke.

Organizations participating in the May 18 health fair include: American Heart/American Stroke Association, DOH Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division, DOH Public Health Nursing Branch, Hawai'i Medical Service Association, Kaiser Permanente and Queen's Medical Center.

For more information on strokes, go to: <http://health.hawaii.gov/heart-disease-stroke/home/stroke/> or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at: <https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/>.

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