

HEALTH ALERT!

What Boomers Should Know About Stroke

(NAPSA)—A recent American Stroke Association survey shows that when it comes to stroke and baby boomers, there is good news and bad news. The good news is that about 75 percent of baby boomers (people age 38-57) know at least one of the stroke warning signs and to immediately call 9-1-1 when they suspect that someone is having a stroke. The bad news is that many of the baby boomers are in denial about their own risk for stroke.

Most boomers are quickly reaching age 55 where, according to the NHLBI's Framingham Heart Study, their risk of stroke will begin to double with each successive decade.

In the recent American Stroke Association survey, when participants were asked, "when does your risk of stroke increase?," many said an age greater than their own. More importantly, they were not worried about stroke as a health threat in general.

Reason—I can't prevent a stroke, so why worry?

Truth—There are controllable risk factors that affect stroke, such as having high cholesterol or blood pressure and smoking. Eating healthy, exercising and not smoking can help reduce risk for stroke.

Reason—I'm not at risk for stroke.

Truth—Stroke can occur at any time, at any age to any person.

Doctors recommend that people—especially boomers—learn the stroke warning signs and teach them to their family and friends. Stroke warning signs include:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, espe-



Family Affair—Doctors say families should know the signs of stroke.

cially on one side of the body.

- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

If you recognize the warning signs in yourself or someone else, call 9-1-1 immediately and get to a hospital within three hours to be assessed for clot-busting drugs. Treatments are available that can help reduce the devastating effects of stroke, but only if you act in time.

For more information, call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE or visit StrokeAssociation.org. The site lets visitors fill out a confidential risk assessment and learn more about risk factors, solutions and resources. You can use that information to work with your physician to reduce your stroke risk.

Note to Editors: This article is evergreen and can be run throughout the year. However, it may be particularly relevant in May, which is American Stroke Month.