

# Health Awareness



## Knowledge Is Power As Fire Chief Acts F.A.S.T. In Response To Mom's Stroke

(NAPSA)—Stroke is a leading cause of death and serious long-term disability in the U.S., killing more than 133,000 people each year. Unfortunately, many Americans do not recognize the signs of stroke, ignore their symptoms or do not call 9-1-1. But for those with firsthand knowledge of what a stroke entails, the results can be very different.

That was the case with Fire Chief Captain John Curry of the Fire Officers Association of Miami-Dade (FOAM-D) when he received a phone call from his mother, Elaine Curry. Elaine had been reading a book when she suddenly realized she was unable to understand the words she was reading on the page.

"I knew there was something wrong with my mom when she called me," Capt. Curry recalls. "She was slurring her words and I was having trouble making out what she was saying. She was exhibiting stroke symptoms."

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries blood and oxygen to the brain is blocked by plaque or a blood clot (acute ischemic stroke), or breaks (hemorrhagic stroke). The visible signs and symptoms of stroke include speech impairment, arm numbness and weakness, severe headache, sudden confusion, trouble seeing out of one or both eyes, as well as uncontrollable drooping of the face.

Recognizing and understanding the signs and symptoms of a stroke is crucial. The brain may lose up to 1.9 million cells each minute that it is deprived of oxygen in a large-vessel acute ischemic stroke, which is why it is

**F**ACE

Facial droop  
Uneven smile



**A**RM

Arm numbness  
Arm weakness

**S**PEECH

Slurred speech  
Difficulty speaking  
or understanding

**T**IME

Call 911 and get to the  
hospital immediately.

### **If someone seems to be having a stroke, think "F.A.S.T."**

imperative to seek immediate medical attention. There are treatments available if a patient's symptoms are recognized quickly and he or she is transported to an emergency room early enough.

Fortunately, Captain Curry's knowledge of stroke symptoms and protocols saved his mother precious time. He quickly called 9-1-1 and Elaine was rushed to the hospital, where Captain Curry was able to talk to her neurologist about treatment options. Thanks to her son's quick recognition of stroke symptoms and the team that cared for Elaine, she was able to resume her normal life with minimal effects.

"In my line of work, I have seen what can happen when a patient ignores his or her symptoms and doesn't seek immediate medical attention," said Capt. Curry. "While it's my job to know the signs of stroke, everyone can educate themselves on recognizing the signs of stroke just by remembering the acronym F.A.S.T."

For more information, go to [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org).