

Boomers Need To Plan For Becoming Caregivers

(NAPSA)—Training relatives in caregiving can ease their burden and aid stroke survivors. More than 81 million baby boomers live in the United States, and most are at or exceed the age of 55. This is the age when the odds of having a stroke and becoming a stroke caregiver starts to increase. It is important to know how to prevent stroke and how to prepare in case you or a family member experiences one.

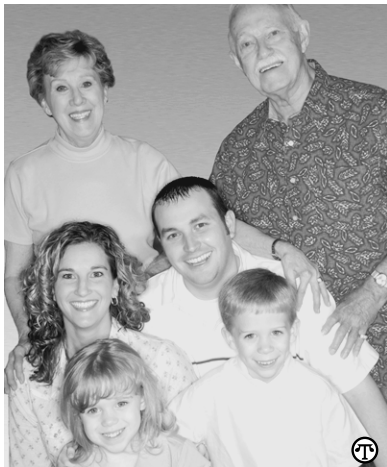
Each year, 700,000 people have a new or recurrent stroke. In adults over 55, the lifetime risk for stroke is greater than one in six and women have a higher risk than men.

The first line of defense for all people, not just those over age 55, is to know the stroke warning signs, manage stroke risk factors and visit the doctor regularly. Some risk factors are high blood pressure, smoking, obesity, having a family history of stroke or having had a TIA (transient ischemic attack), or “ministroke.”

If you or a family member has one or more of these risk factors, there is a real possibility you could become a stroke caregiver. Making plans now will save an immeasurable amount of time and stress later and allow you to concentrate on what really matters in a health crisis—your family member.

According to an American Stroke Association survey, two out of three people say they are prepared in the event they become a caregiver, yet only 7 percent of those same respondents are planning or have planned for the event.

“Families don’t realize that even stroke survivors who regain functional independence will need constant, full-time care for an extended period of time while rehabilitating. They may need care for one month, 10 years or a



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lifetime,” explained Robert Adams, M.D. and American Stroke Association volunteer.

Taking simple actions now can help protect against—and, in some instances, eliminate—the impact that comes with becoming a stroke caregiver.

- First, know and manage your and your family member’s stroke risk factors.
- Second, identify materials to educate yourself and family on what being a caregiver involves.
- Third, ask your at-risk family members about their financial situation.
- Finally, take stock of your own financial health and retirement savings.

For more information on stroke and the resources that the American Stroke Association provides, or to receive a free copy of “Moving Forward After Stroke: A Financial Education for Caregivers,” call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE or visit StrokeAssociation.org.



Note to Editors: Although this story is good to use at any time, November is National Caregivers Month.