

Decade of efforts in stroke documented in new report

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The American Stroke Association and other organizations have spent the last decade changing the care delivery system for stroke in the United States. Now the focus must include greater emphasis on prevention and recovery, according to a special report published in *Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

The report, "Translating Evidence into Practice: A decade of efforts by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association to reduce death and disability from stroke," documents the organization's essential contributions - successes and missteps - since its creation in 1998.

"The American Stroke Association and its many partners spent the last decade methodically, thoughtfully and effectively changing the care delivery system for stroke in this country. The efforts outlined in this document should be considered a case study in system change. There is, though, much more to do," according to the report, written by Lee H. Schwamm, M.D., Pierre Fayad, M.D., and others. Among the successes noted, The American Stroke Association:

- has funded more stroke-related research than any other non-industry organization except the federal government;
- developed the first scientific journal focused exclusively on stroke - *Stroke*;

- helped the Joint Commission develop the Primary Stroke Centers certification program;
- created Get With the Guidelines®-Stroke - an in hospital quality improvement program - and drove the harmonization efforts for quality improvement measures with other agencies;
- developed Power To End Stroke, a stroke education campaign for [African Americans](#) and supported other cause initiatives associated with raising awareness on stroke related risk factors;
- developed programs to increase EMS education and training; and
- advocated successfully for increased stroke reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid.

Additionally, the association recently launched Target: Stroke, an initiative aimed at helping providers with information and tools to improve the door-to-needle time for giving clot-busting drugs to appropriate stroke patients.

A major focus of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association over the next decade articulated in the organization's 2020 goal will be on improving cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20 percent, while reducing deaths from cardiovascular disease by 20 percent.

The report serves to highlight some activities that the association thinks will be important to further improving care for stroke patients during the next decade. The report is also intended to serve as a blueprint for other nonprofit organizations to help reshape public healthcare and improve health outcomes.

"Modest alterations in health behaviors can have a substantial effect on [stroke](#) risk," according to the report. "The focus for the next decade will be to shift individuals and communities to states of ideal cardiovascular health, which will translate into fewer strokes."

More information: To view the full report, visit:
stroke.ahajournals.org/

Provided by American Heart Association

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