

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 06-0177R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: President Dixon, Councilmembers D'Adamo, Kraft, Curran, Young, Welch,
Rawlings Blake, Clarke, Mitchell, Harris, Conaway, Holton, Reisinger, Branch
Introduced and adopted: May 8, 2006

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

National Stroke Awareness Month

FOR the purpose of celebrating National Stroke Awareness Month and increasing community education and awareness about the prevalence of stroke, the risk factors for having a stroke, and the Stroke Prevention Guidelines that will reduce the chance of succumbing to this oftentimes silent killer.

Recitals

The National Stroke Association reports that stroke is the 3rd leading cause of death in America and the number 1 cause of adult disability. Approximately 750,000 Americans will have a stroke this year, and about 160,000 will die from strokes. Although anyone can have a stroke, the chances of a stroke increase if certain risk factors are present that are beyond a person's control, – being over age 55, being male, being African American, Hispanic, or Asian/Pacific Islander, or having a family history of stroke.

There are many factors that increase the risk of stroke that can be controlled. Diseases that increase risk, such as high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation, high cholesterol, and diabetes, can be controlled. And lifestyle choices such as tobacco use and smoking, alcohol use, and obesity and excessive weight are also factors that can be controlled. High blood pressure can weaken blood vessels and damage major organs, atrial fibrillation raises stroke risk because it allows blood to pool in the heart, high cholesterol can clog arteries, 2 out of 3 people with diabetes die from stroke or heart disease, smoking doubles the risk of stroke, alcohol has been linked to stroke in some studies, and excess weight puts a strain on the entire circulatory system.

African Americans are twice as likely to die from stroke as Caucasians; the rate of first strokes in African Americans is almost double that of Caucasians. African Americans are affected by stroke more often than any other group. Not all of the reasons for this fact are clear, but some factors include a higher rate of high blood pressure – 1 in every 3 African Americans suffer from this disease; diabetes – a high risk factor; and sickle cell anemia – if sickle-shaped cells block a blood vessel to the brain, a stroke can result. African Americans also have a higher incidence than Caucasians of obesity and smoking.

Twice as many women die of stroke than breast cancer each year. Despite this startling statistic, women are more concerned about their risk of getting breast cancer than their stroke risk. Women tend to think stroke is a men's disease, while the truth is that more women than men will die from stroke. Children also have strokes. Although the incidence of stroke in children is relatively low – about 3 cases in every 100,000 children per year, strokes are more common in children under the age of 2.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 A stroke or “brain attack” occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery – a blood vessel that
2 carries blood from the heart to the body – or a blood vessel – a tube through which the blood
3 moves through the body – breaks, interrupting blood flow to an area of the brain. When either of
4 these things happen, brain cells begin to die and brain damage occurs. When brain cells die
5 during a stroke, abilities controlled by the brain are lost. These abilities include speech,
6 movement and memory. How a stroke patient is affected depends on where the stroke occurs in
7 the brain and how much the brain is damaged.

8 According to the American Stroke Association, warning signs of a stroke include:

- 9 • Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, body, arm, or leg, especially on one side
10 of the body.
- 11 • Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- 12 • Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- 13 • Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- 14 • Sudden, severe headache with no know cause.

15 Baltimore residents need to be cognizant of the risk of stroke, particularly young African
16 American males. A study of young blacks in Baltimore City and Baltimore County conducted
17 by the University of Maryland Medical Center found that, consistent with the national trend, that
18 they are 2 to 3 times more likely to suffer a stroke than their white counterparts. The researchers
19 also found that ischemic strokes, those resulting from blocked blood flow, were twice as frequent
20 among black men and women. And hemorrhagic strokes, those caused by the rupture of a blood
21 vessel in the brain, were 3 times more common among blacks.

22 The research shows that regardless of gender, race, and even age, we all need to be aware of
23 the warning signs of stroke so that, should it happen to us, our family, or friends, we can get
24 immediate medical intervention. And most importantly, we need to change those life style
25 factors over which we have control, which can lead to stroke and its debilitating results.

26 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this
27 Body endorses the celebrating of National Stroke Awareness Month and increasing community
28 education and awareness about the prevalence of stroke, the risk factors for having a stroke, and
29 the Stoke Prevention Guidelines that will reduce the chance of succumbing to this oftentimes
30 silent killer.

31 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
32 Health Commissioner, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.