



Commonwealth of Virginia

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Joint Board Matter

Chairman Jeff McKay, Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Supervisor Dalia Palchik

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Mr. Chairman, one in six people will have a stroke in their lifetime. Strokes are the leading cause of long-term disability, putting a tremendous emotional and financial burden on individuals, families, and communities.

There are life-saving treatments that must be administered within 3-4 hours once stroke symptoms begin, and only a very small percentage of patients get to the hospital within the treatment window because the majority of people do not know how to spot a stroke, or understand the importance of calling 911 immediately. Additionally, the stroke onset-to-911 call time has not significantly changed for the last 25 years.

In 2021, Stroke Smart launched a public health initiative to improve stroke knowledge and response to strokes in the commonwealth. They provide

educational videos, marketing materials and classes to increase stroke symptom awareness. Their outreach to my office significantly increased my awareness around this issue, and has convinced me of the value of targeted public outreach campaigns aimed at stroke response.

Increasing stroke awareness is vital to creating healthier communities and reducing long-term disabilities. Implementing stroke education outreach to businesses, civic organizations, senior communities, and faith-based organizations as well as health and safety-focused entities such as hospitals, health departments, fire, EMS, public safety, social services, and the Area Agency on Aging will help ensure that Fairfax County residents have access to the knowledge and resources necessary to effectively respond to a stroke incident.

Therefore with this goal in mind, Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board direct the County Executive to assign the Office of Public Affairs to prepare a proclamation to establish May as official “Stroke Smart Month” in Fairfax County to coincide with the already established National Stroke Awareness Month. This proclamation should be supplemented by a county sponsored public awareness campaign with marketing materials developed prior to May with a goal of educating Fairfax County residents on recognizing stroke symptoms and the importance of dialing

911 immediately. In order to reduce the costs and staff time necessary to meet this goal, staff should coordinate with existing Stroke Smart programs, utilize existing marketing materials that have already been developed, and conduct outreach to other stroke awareness organizations that may be doing similar work.