

Washington State Department of Health
Cardiovascular, Diabetes, Nutrition & Physical Activity Section

COMMUNICATION PLAN
Signs of Stroke Campaign—May through June 2005

Program Description

The Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program is developing an awareness campaign targeting African Americans in Pierce and King Counties about the signs of stroke. Desautel Hege is working with our Communications Specialist to develop the creative and place media buys. Dr. Maxine Hayes is the spokesperson for this campaign.

The timing of the campaign will coincide with national advertising and health promotion initiatives by the American Stroke Association. We are working with the American Heart Association to help establish contact with Tacoma-area churches participating in the Search Your Heart Campaign. Dr. Hayes was the keynote speaker for the kickoff of Search Your Heart. AHA will offset printing costs for these materials.

Desautel Hege is creating a graphic depicting the three SOS (Signs of Stroke) messages we would like people to remember. They are to ask the person to 1. Smile, 2. Raise both arms, 3. Speak a simple sentence. If the person cannot perform any one of these tasks, 9-1-1 should be called because every minute increases the chance of brain damage.

Communication Issues

- African Americans have higher rates of hospitalization and death due to stroke than do whites.
- Stroke can occur in any age, although it is most common in those over age 65.
- There is low awareness of symptoms of stroke.
- Like heart attack, it is important to educate people who might witness someone experiencing stroke.
- There are more African Americans in Pierce and King Counties than elsewhere in the state, therefore focusing health promotion messages in western Washington media outlets gives us a better opportunity to evaluate outcomes.

Campaign Elements

- **Radio:** Maxine will record two 60-second spots with different lead-ins. Because one will be on a station with a younger African American audience, the lead-in will be "Would you know what a stroke looks like in one of your parents or grandparents?" Otherwise, it's identical to the other spot which introduces an easy-to-remember "SOS" (Signs of Stroke) sequence.
- **Print:** Ads will be placed in African American publications and NW Colors magazine. All outlets will also run a guest editorial by Maxine.

- **Rack cards:** These are intended for hand-outs in African-American churches participating in American Heart Association's Search Your Heart campaign and will feature a photo of Maxine with an older Black man or woman.
- **Magnets:** These will feature the three questions to ask someone suspected of having a stroke. The magnets will be clipped to church bulletins that include the rack cards. Magnets will also be included in mailings sent to those who call the 800 number.
- **Speaking engagements:** We are making arrangements for Dr. Hayes to speak at church services, spread out through the summer months.
- **Direct mailer:** Copy for this will be nearly identical to the rack card, except it won't directly address African Americans. This will be targeted to Medicaid recipients in Pierce County zip codes, have a more general message, and feature a photo of Maxine with an older person. The direct mail piece will be two-sided, English/Spanish.
- **News release:** This will announce the African American campaign and will include information on the three questions to ask a person suspected of having a stroke, as well as data from the Burden Report on risk factors for stroke, and morbidity and mortality data.
- **800 Number:** The 800 number used by the chronic disease programs will be featured in advertising. We will have materials on hand to mail to callers who request more information about stroke. Materials will be ordered from American Stroke Association. Additional materials to include are the rack cards and magnets described above.

Audience(s)

- African American adults ages 18+ in Pierce and King Counties.
- Church congregations in Pierce County participating in American Heart Association's Search Your Heart Campaign.
- English and Spanish-speaking households in Pierce County who receive Medicaid checks

Message(s)

- Three simple questions can help you determine if someone is having a stroke:
 - o Smile...while you look for facial weakness, especially on one side.
 - o Raise both arms...while you watch for both arms to remain at the same height.
 - o And speak a simple sentence...while you listen for slurring.
- Call 9-1-1 immediately if the person cannot do even one of these tasks.
- Every minute that passes increases the chance of brain damage.

Desired Outcome

- Increased awareness about identifying a stroke and why it is important to take immediate action.

DRAFT
April 15, 2005

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Timeline

Confirm level of involvement with American Heart Association	April 15
Record Maxine for radio ads, photo shoot	April 21
Reserve space for print, radio ads	April 22
Website update	May 13
Press release	May 16
Ads run	May 15-June 30
Speaking engagements (3) in Pierce County churches	May 15-July
Medicaid check inserts printed and sent to mail room	June 20