

## Health Notes

### Stroke

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We all know someone who has had a stroke, yet few people know what a stroke really is.

Strokes can occur at any age, not just to older people. Unhealthy lifestyles – such as poor dietary habits, smoking, and lack of exercise – leave people prone to strokes. The associated risk factors of stroke are: obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, alcohol abuse, diabetes, a family history of stroke or heart arrhythmia, and being of African-American heritage. Strokes are the most common cause of disability in America, and are the third most common cause of death in adults.

A stroke results when a portion of the brain experiences a lack of blood supply. Within minutes, that portion of the brain will die. With this type of interruption in blood flow, brain cells can not regenerate and long-term neurological effects develop.

Stroke patients' outcomes vary. Age, general health, the brain region affected, and the extent of the brain damage all affect a victim's outcome.

Difficulty speaking, poor memory, altered emotions, amnesia, extremity deformities, difficulty with movement, weakness, and paralysis are common long-term side effects of stroke. As a rule, the weakness and paralysis affects the side of the body opposite the side of the stroke. Some of the effects can be

permanent, while others may resolve with time and treatment.

A condition known as T.I.A., or transient ischemic attack, is considered to be a "pre-stroke" or a precursor to a full-fledged stroke. In a T.I.A., the brain experiences a short-term loss of blood supply for a few seconds to a few minutes with no permanent damage. This is not a condition to be taken lightly and should receive immediate attention.

The warning signs of stroke range from being very specific to vague. Sudden slurred speech or difficulty understanding what people are saying, sudden numbness or tingling on one side of the face and/or body as well as sudden onset of confusion, loss of consciousness or not recognizing familiar people are three specific warning signs of stroke. Other signs such as sudden onset of dizziness, loss of balance, vision problems, or severe headache never experienced before are all possible signs of stroke.

The important attention getting sign of stroke is the term "sudden onset." This term implies just what it says – for no apparent reason the symptoms develop suddenly. Nothing leads up to a "sudden onset" condition. They occur at an unexplained period of time.

If you or someone you know ever experiences any of these symptoms with "sudden onset," do not hesitate to get immediate medical attention. With strokes, the quicker the medical intervention the better. Do not worry that your doctor will not find anything wrong. The doctors I know have great pleasure in giving people good news. When the possibility of stroke is suspected, it is better to be safe than sorry, you may not get a second chance. ☆

## Good Works

### Big Brothers/Big Sisters Recognition Dinner Set for October 14<sup>th</sup>

On Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup> *Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ulster County* will hold their 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Recognition Dinner at Twin Lakes in Hurley.

This year's Community Award honorees include: Richard Hlavsa; Judy Ciccarino; Fireside Warmth Inc.; and Cellular One. This year's Community-Based Mentoring Program's Big Sister of the Year is Anita Mastrocola and David Manning is this year's Big Brother of the Year. In our School-Based Mentoring Program, Valerie Fanarjian is this year's Big Sister of the Year and John Spindler is this year's Big Brother of the Year.

This year's keynote speaker is Rev. Wilson Goode, the first African-American to be elected mayor of Philadelphia, who is known nationally for his work with designing and implementing mentoring programs for children of incarcerated parents.

Recently Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ulster County was awarded a grant by U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services to implement a program that partners children of incarcerated parents with mentors from faith-based organizations. Rev. Goode is a much sought after speaker and makes over 150 appearances annually.

In addition to the dinner, there will also be a Silent Auction and a Live Auction as well. Our Mistress of Ceremonies is Ellen Reinhard from TFAC and the evening's auctioneer will be George Cole Appraisers. Many wonderful pieces of artwork by local artists, luxury packages at area hotels and restaurants, and a variety of items and services are available for bidding.

For ticket information please contact: *Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ulster County* at 95 Grand St. Kingston, NY 12401 or call 338-0431 or fax 331-2262 or e-mail [BigBrotherBigSister@hvc.rr.com](mailto:BigBrotherBigSister@hvc.rr.com). Tickets are \$75 per person and \$700 for a table of ten. Credit card payments are accepted over the phone for your convenience.

Proceeds from this event help to provide mentoring programming for over 400 children in Ulster County. ☆

**Tuesday–Saturday from 5 pm**  
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