

How to Have Stroke Smart Retirement Communities



Emphasizing that the person suffering the stroke is likely not the person able to activate emergency medical personnel, Stroke Smart Retirement Communities aim to make each resident and staff member Stroke Smart by...

1. Displaying Stroke Smart materials in high visibility locations, with posters on bulletin boards and offerings of magnets and wallet cards at visitor check in locations, dining rooms, and information desks, for example,
2. Offering yearly Stroke Smart lectures, highlighting the symptoms, and urging activation of their internal emergency procedures when at the community and 911 when outside,
3. Educating all new staff members and residents with their present significant others of the signs and symptoms of stroke upon admission, and
4. Recruiting Stroke Smart champions who ensure each resident is Stroke Smart through personal one-on-one conversations.

Stroke Smart efforts with retirement communities often begin by contacting the community's medical director and asking to offer a Stroke Smart presentation to the residents, who often greatly appreciate the information. **Suggestions for action items when working to make a retirement community Stroke Smart can be found below.**

Senior Residential Communities

GOAL – Residential communities' staff and residents save lives and reduce disability through increased stroke awareness.

Action Items

- Understand how 911 calls are handled; if the facility intercepts them or uses pendants or call buttons to activate internal staff, train staff who answer those calls to alert 911 when callers describe symptoms indicative of stroke.
- Train all residents and staff to spot and stop a stroke:

Housekeepers

Drivers (for outings/appointments, etc.)

Activity planners

Meal preparers

Administrative staff

Sales staff: This could be a sales pitch for prospective residents

- Encourage activity planners (i.e., massage therapists, cosmetology students, hairdressers, art teachers, musicians, etc.) to learn the signs and symptoms of stroke and to alert emergency personnel if a stroke is suspected.
- Encourage all guest entertainers to learn stroke signs and symptoms during their orientation to the facility, encouraging them to alert medical personnel if a stroke is suspected.
- Provide posters, magnets, and wallet cards for display and distribution.
- Write a letter to the senior facility days after the initial visit to:
 - 1 - Thank them for their time;
 - 2 - Inquire of further needs and for feedback; and
 - 3 - Request recommendations and introduction of colleagues who might also appreciate this training.
- Identify SS champion residents committed to door knocking throughout facility.

Make Your Retirement Community Stroke Smart!

[Leave Behind after your Presentation with the Activity Director]

- Consider identifying resident SS champions willing to educate every resident to be Stroke Smart using these simple talking points:
 - a) Strokes are medical emergencies that can kill and disable you
 - b) If accessed in time, medical treatment can stop the stroke (within one hour)
 - c) There are 5 symptoms and 2 tests to help you spot a stroke:

Five Symptoms

Sudden onset of:

- 1 - Slurred speech,
- 2 - Weakness/numbness on one side of the body,
- 3 - Loss of balance,
- 4 - Vision loss,
- 5 - Sudden, severe headache

Two Tests

- 1 - Ask the person to smile—facial drooping is a sign of stroke, and
- 2 - Ask the person to raise their arms—arm drift downward is a sign of stroke. Call 911 if you suspect a stroke!
- 3 - Display the Stroke Smart posters throughout the facility in cases anywhere announcements are posted.
- 4 - Include the 2 tests/5 signs in regular newsletters to residents and their families.
- 5 - Include the magnet and wallet card in each new resident packet
- 6 - Train all those working with and entertaining residents to become stroke smart.