

HEART DISEASE AND STROKE PROGRAM TAKES THE MYSTERY OUT OF CALLING 911

Saving lives means raising awareness of signs & symptoms of heart attack and stroke

Public Health Problem

- Almost half of stroke deaths occur before victims can be hospitalized.
- More people die from heart disease and stroke than from all cancers and three other leading causes of death, combined.
- People having strokes and heart attacks often don't recognize the signs or they mistake them for something less serious. Some won't call 911 because they fear they'll tie up emergency medical services for a minor problem.
- The yearly cost of heart disease and stroke in Pennsylvania is estimated at over \$13 million including hospitalization, physician care, drugs, lost productivity, lost earnings, and home health and nursing home care.

Intervention

- The Pennsylvania Heart Disease and Stroke Program partnered with the Department's Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and the American Heart Association, to educate residents on heart disease and stroke risk factors, signs of a heart attack or stroke, when to call 911, and what to expect once the call is made. A total of 4,353 adults were reached.
- Ambulance providers in ten high-risk counties were trained and provided educational programs to the public at churches, malls, fire halls, granges, community centers and other community sites.

Impact

- One Pennsylvania woman's story highlights the important benefit to the community of this program:
A 71-year old woman resident attended a presentation by the Danville Ambulance Service at a local senior center. The next day she called 911 to report personal stroke signs of dizziness and weakness. That very ambulance service transported her to Geisinger Medical Center where she was treated immediately for a stroke. After a few days at the local Rehabilitation Center, she is living back in her own home.

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