

Oklahoma State Senate

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Senate Leaders Promote Stroke Education Program ***(For digital audio, go to www.oksenate.gov)***

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in Oklahoma and the leading cause of adult disabilities. That's why Senate Health and Human Services Committee Co-Chairs Todd Lamb and Andrew Rice are urging Oklahomans to take advantage of a program to better educate citizens about how to identify and help stroke victims.

"About 800 Oklahomans have strokes every single month, and that isn't even counting patients in veteran or Indian Health Service hospitals. Being able to tell when a person may be having a stroke and making sure they get medical attention immediately can literally mean the difference between life and death," said Lamb, R-Edmond. "That's why we want to let people know about the State Health Department's Act FAST! campaign."

FAST! stands for Face droop, Arm drift down, Speech Slurred and Time to call 911. The campaign is a statewide effort developed by the Oklahoma State Stroke Systems Advisory Committee and the Oklahoma State Health Department. The Health Department has an Act Fast! kit which includes a three-minute animated DVD, posters, FAQs and other material to help teach people how to read the signs of a stroke and what to do.

"In 1998, Oklahoma ranked 16th in the nation for stroke deaths. By just 2001, we were 10th highest. By 2004, we were 6th highest in the nation for stroke deaths," said Rice, D-Oklahoma City. "The tragedy is, because folks don't understand the warning signs, people are dying or becoming permanently disabled. Clearly, we need to do a better job of educating Oklahomans about stroke. The Act FAST! campaign can help us save lives and prevent or reduce life-long disabilities."

Rice and Lamb urged families, civic organizations, churches and other groups to take advantage of the free program by calling 1-888-669-5934 for an Act FAST! toolkit.

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