

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

General Facts

- Cerebrovascular disease, or stroke, is the third leading cause of death in the United States and the fourth leading cause of death in West Virginia.
- The American Heart Association estimates that more than 700,000 Americans suffer a stroke each year. A stroke death occurs every three minutes.
- Demographic risk factors for stroke include older age, especially for women, being an African-American, having a lower socioeconomic status, and having a family history of stroke.
- Other risk factors for stroke include hypertension, cardiac disorders, cigarette smoking, obesity, physical inactivity, elevated blood cholesterol and homocysteine levels, diabetes, binge drinking, diets lacking in adequate fruit and vegetable consumption, sickle cell anemia, sleep apnea, cocaine and amphetamine use, inflammation, stress, and anger.
- It is estimated that the economic costs of stroke in the United States in 2004 will be \$53.8 billion. Two-thirds of this comprises direct health care costs such as hospital and nursing home care, physicians, drugs, and home health care and other medical durables. The remainder consists of indirect costs such as lost productivity due to morbidity and mortality.

West Virginia Statistics

Stroke Risk Factors

- One-third (33%) of adult West Virginians reported that they had high blood pressure in 2001, continuing an upward trend in this risk factor since 1992.
- Twenty-eight percent (28%) of adults in West Virginia reported that they were current smokers in 2002; however, youth smoking in the state decreased by 20% between 1999 and 2002.
- West Virginia had the highest prevalence of obesity in the nation (28%) in 2002; in 2001 the state ranked first in the percentage of adults who had been told their cholesterol was high (38%).

- In 2002, West Virginia was second only to Puerto Rico in the prevalence of diabetes (10%) among adults. Twenty-four percent (24%) of adult West Virginians reported no leisure-time physical activity, the continuation of a downward trend in this risk factor since a high of 45% was reported in 1994.

Stroke Hospitalizations

- There were 5,783 hospitalizations of West Virginia residents in West Virginia hospitals in 2001 that were due to stroke; women accounted for 62% of these.
- West Virginia's overall rate of 32.1 hospitalizations per 10,000 population in 2001 was higher than the national rate of 27.1. Both men and women were hospitalized for stroke at higher rates than in the nation as a whole.
- Total charges for in-patient hospitalizations for stroke have increased steadily since 1997, from \$35 million in that year to \$49 million in 2001.

Stroke Mortality

- There were 1,262 deaths from stroke in West Virginia in 2001, 482 men and 780 women. While stroke is the fourth leading cause of death among men, it is the third leading cause of death among women in West Virginia.
- West Virginia's 2001 age-adjusted rate of 59.8 deaths per 100,000 population was slightly higher than the United States age-adjusted rate of 57.9.
- The 2001 age-adjusted rate of stroke mortality among African-Americans in West Virginia was 74.4 deaths per 100,000, compared with a rate of 59.9 among the state's white population.
- Nearly one-fourth (23%) of stroke deaths among African-Americans in West Virginia in 2001 occurred prematurely, or before the age of 65; among whites, only 10% of stroke deaths were premature.