

# Health Bulletin



## Stroke Survivors: Hope May Be On The Horizon

(NAPSA)—Studies reveal that stroke survivors who enroll in rehabilitation services recover faster and more effectively than those who don't seek treatment. The National Rehabilitation Caucus indicates that 60 percent of stroke survivors can benefit from aggressive rehabilitation intervention, with up to 70 percent of those treated through rehabilitation services returning to their home, work, school or active retirement.

Of the 4.5 million stroke survivors alive today, about a third of them are left permanently disabled, according to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. Many stroke patients are faced with everyday challenges, ranging from difficulty in speaking to walking. One of the most common problems is aphasia—a total or partial loss of the ability to use words, which is most often caused by damage to the brain's language center.

Some people quickly and completely recover from aphasia after a stroke, but others may have permanent speech and language problems (i.e., finding words to speak; sentence formulation; understanding what others are saying; having trouble with reading, writing or math).

According to a report in *Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association*, stroke patients who were given a controlled dosage of an amphetamine, combined with speech/language therapy treatment, experienced an accelerated rate of aphasia recovery.

Another example of a new advance in rehabilitation for stroke is the AutoAmbulator, a therapeutic robotic machine developed by HealthSouth Corporation. It was designed to help people regain walking skills lost to conditions such as stroke, and allows patients to "walk" while their upper body is supported by an overhead harness system, and their legs are secured to rotating robotic arms.



**Aggressive rehabilitation may be the best medicine for stroke survivors.**

Stroke survivors can benefit from various areas of rehabilitation, including self-care (feeding, bathing and dressing); mobilization (walking); cognition (memory or problem-solving); and socialization (interacting with other people).

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States, and a leading cause of severe, long-term disability. One of the best ways to reduce your risk for death and disability from stroke is to know the warning signs of stroke and seek immediate medical attention. The warning signs of stroke are: Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body; sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination; and sudden severe headache with no known cause.

To find out more about stroke rehabilitative services and life after stroke, call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE and ask for the Stroke Family Support Network or visit [www.strokeassociation.org](http://www.strokeassociation.org).



*Note to Editors: September is National Rehabilitation Month but this story can be used throughout the year.*