

Health Care In Our Lives

Support Network Helps

(NAPSA)—If you or someone you care about is ever among the nearly 2 million Americans who have a heart attack, a stroke or are diagnosed with heart disease every year, the key to recovery could come from a surprising source.

Research suggests that having a support network—for the patient and the caregiver—can be vital. That's because helping people heal emotionally after a heart attack or stroke can also help them heal physically.



A support network can help stroke or heart patients and their caregivers recover physically and emotionally.

A study in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* found that a general lack of social support is associated with poor health and quality of life and depression in young men and women a year after having a heart attack.

In addition, the patient isn't the only one affected by these life-changing events. The stress of caring for a disabled spouse can significantly raise a caregiver's risk of future stroke, according to a study in the journal *Stroke*.

In response, the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's new initiative is to provide emotional and practical support to people living with heart disease and stroke.

The organizations' Support Network offers an online community, as well as materials for starting face-to-face, community-based support groups. The monitored online community is a place for people to ask questions, share concerns or fears, provide helpful tips, and find encouragement and inspiration.

To learn more and to find a nearby network, go to www.heart.org/supportnetwork.