

Know the Signs of Stroke: Wayne's Story

May is American Stroke Month

When Wayne Lenover dropped a pair of boots he was carrying, he didn't think anything of it. He was also ready to look past a numbing sensation in his face and hand. But when he fell in front of his wife Kathy and brother Earl, they realized as they helped him up it wasn't a case of clumsiness. Wayne was having a stroke.

"I kept saying, 'I'm okay. I'm okay.' Even when they got me in the chair. 'I'm okay.' 'No you're not, Wayne.' Until the ambulance arrived, and the first thing she said was, 'Mr. Lenover, you're having a stroke.' I didn't know because I was only using half my brain," said Lenover.

The 67 year-old retired police officer suffered his stroke on February 16 of 2018. From the time Mrs. Lenover dialed 911 in Eureka, Wayne arrived at OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center 19 minutes later.

Dr. Manas Upadhyaya is a vascular neurohospitalist, or stroke neurologist, at OSF Saint Francis. His team was able to assess Mr. Lenover's situation and provide him with a clot-busting medication called tPA minutes upon his arrival, setting the stage for a full recovery.

"We were able to give him tPA within eight minutes, got him into the angio suite within an hour after that, and he had complete reperfusion, when his blood flow was completely wide open within a couple of hours from when he was his last normal self," recalled Dr. Upadhyaya.

Looking back now, Wayne says the timing of his treatment is almost dream-like, and while he doesn't trust his own memories, he knows that speed was a factor in his outcome.

"I vividly remember them pushing me in on the cot, and it seemed like there was a crew already there," remembered Lenover. "Now I might be imagining things, keep in mind I was only using half my brain, but it seemed like there were people right there."

However, Wayne wasn't imagining things at all. Dr. Upadhyaya says when a possible stroke is reported to emergency crews, it's all hands on deck. This teamwork and readiness is what sets OSF Saint Francis apart.

"If we think that somebody is having a stroke out in the field, they send out an alert, where we know about it right away," he explained. "So we actually meet the patients in the emergency department, and so I was able to see him right away when he entered the hospital, got him into the CAT scan right away and determined he was having a stroke."

In Wayne's case, the recognition of his stroke symptoms by his wife and brother, and their quick actions in calling 911 likely saved his life. According to Dr. Upadhyaya, during a stroke event, every second lost means brain cells lost, and many people don't recover.

"It's extremely important because time is so sensitive, and unfortunately we do see the other side of that as well where patients or family members suspect that somebody might be having a stroke, or they think something is wrong and sometimes we make the mistake of thinking it will just go away. When you have a blood clot or bleeding in the brain that's causing you to have stroke, that's a medical emergency; it's life threatening and quick action can not only save your life, but as well prevent severe disability," warned Dr. Upadhyaya.

Wayne was able to leave the hospital two days after he was admitted, and is now fully recovered and back to retired life with Kathy in Eureka.

May is American Stroke month, and this year hospitals across the country are reporting a dramatic decline in the number of stroke patients in their emergency rooms, as patients fearful of contracting COVID-19 dismiss or suffer through symptoms.

All OSF emergency departments have made sure they can safely treat all patients by screening and isolating any patients believed to be at risk of COVID-19.

By keeping patients separated and using personal protective equipment such as masks, emergency rooms are still a safe and necessary destination for those in need of immediate medical care.

OSF HealthCare Illinois Neurological Institute Comprehensive Stroke Center at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center is a destination stroke treatment center. This institution earned a stellar reputation for providing the highest level of stroke care demonstrated by its recent re-designation as a **certified Comprehensive Stroke Center**. To learn more, click [here](#) or call (309) 624-4000

Recognizing the Signs of Stroke

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death and the number one cause of adult disability in the United States. This year, 795,000 people will have a stroke. It takes only 12 minutes for a pea-sized area of the brain to die, from the onset of stroke. This means time is critical. If you are experiencing symptoms of a stroke, don't wait, call 911 immediately.

One in three Americans don't know the signs of a stroke. This means many cannot recognize when they, or someone else, is having a stroke. Stroke is a medical emergency. Treatment for an ischemic stroke can only be given within a certain time window. Prompt recognition and emergent medical care are the keys to treating a stroke. Learn the warning signs and how to act FAST for stroke.

An acronym has been created to make spotting a stroke easier: it is **BE FAST. Call 911 if you or someone else has any of these symptoms:**

- **Balance** - a sudden loss of balance or coordination
- **Eyes** - sudden blurred or double vision or sudden, persistent vision trouble?
- **Face** - one of side of the face droops down or the smile is crooked
- **Arm** - unable to lift an arm or keep an arm up without drifting down
- **Speech** - slurred speech, unable to correctly repeat a simple phrase, or unable to understand speech
- **Time** - it's time to call 911.