



**MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday, October 29, 2015

### **NHS joins global campaign to raise women's awareness of stroke**

Today, Niagara Health System is joining forces with stroke campaigners around the world on World Stroke Day, as part of the global effort to raise awareness of stroke for women.

Globally women run a higher risk of stroke and are more likely than men to die as a result. To help address this situation, Niagara Health System is releasing a variety of information to help educate Ontarians to the risk women face from stroke.

“One in five women globally will experience a stroke in their lifetime, compared to one in six men,” said World Stroke Organization (WSO) President Stephen Davis. “Other than their longer life expectancy, women have an increased burden of major stroke risk factors including hypertension, irregular heartbeat, diabetes, depression and obesity. Furthermore, specific risk factors and settings in women include pregnancy, the post-partum period and some hormonal replacement therapies. Some kinds of stroke, such as aneurysmal subarachnoid hemorrhage and cerebral venous thrombosis, are more common in women.”

Stroke is a syndrome caused by a disruption in blood flow to a part of the brain. It occurs when the blood vessel either ruptures or becomes blocked. A stroke deprives the neurons and other brain cells of glucose and oxygen, which leads to cell death. The longer the brain is deprived of oxygen and nutrients, the higher the likelihood of permanent damage to the brain. This damage can have different effects, depending on where it happens in the brain. It can affect the body and mobility, speech as well as how a person thinks and feels. Stroke is the number two cause of death and a leading cause of disability globally.

Stroke also increases the risk of dementia. This is particularly relevant to women, given their greater lifetime stroke risk. The WSO is therefore publishing a global Proclamation on World Stroke Day, highlighting stroke and preventable dementia. Authored by Professor Vladimir Hachinski and endorsed by many leading global health bodies, this Proclamation emphasizes the close link between stroke and dementia, and that dementia may be potentially preventable by stroke prevention strategies, including lifestyle changes, identification and treatment of risk factors.

The World Stroke Organization and the Niagara Health System are calling on women to get a health check and to encourage those around them to do the same - be aware of stroke and to discuss risks and prevention strategies with a qualified health professional. You can find out more about stroke at [www.niagarahealth.on.ca/en/stroke-centre](http://www.niagarahealth.on.ca/en/stroke-centre) and the global campaign at [www.worldstrokecampaign.org](http://www.worldstrokecampaign.org).

#### **ABOUT STROKE CARE IN NIAGARA**

The NHS's Niagara District Stroke Centre is the regional centre for stroke care. It is located at the Greater Niagara General Site, where a specially trained Emergency Department stroke team treats patients from across the region. This includes assessment for and administration of t-PA, a clot-busting drug that may stop an ischemic stroke.

**Media contact:** Steven Gallagher, Communications Specialist, 905-378-4647, ext. 43879;  
steven.gallagher@niagarahealth.on.ca