



Senate Bill 20 – Proponent Testimony

Senate Health Committee

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February 19, 2025

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Ohio Senate Health Committee, thank you for allowing Cleveland Clinic to share testimony in support of Senate Bill 20, which would designate the first week of May as “Ohio Stroke Awareness Week.” Cleveland Clinic’s Stroke Program is one of the nation’s largest stroke practices; offering comprehensive, advanced stroke treatments and a team of specialists that provide the long-term, expert care needed to regain independence after a stroke. Our stroke system includes 12 hospitals across Northeast Ohio and represents one of the most integrated systems in the country.

At Cleveland Clinic Main Campus, our Joint Commission Certified Comprehensive Stroke Center provides life-saving care for the most complex stroke patients, including offering thrombectomy, a clot removing procedure which is one of the most effective treatments in all of medicine. This procedure is also available at our other Thrombectomy Capable Stroke Centers at Akron General, Hillcrest Hospital and Fairview Hospital. Also, our network of eight Primary Stroke Centers and nine stroke treatment-capable emergency departments use consistent protocols to ensure the best outcomes for patients. Cleveland Clinic also has one of the first Mobile Stroke Treatment Units in the country (>10 years running), bringing advanced stroke care to patients to shorten the time between the onset of stroke-like symptoms and the delivery of a “clot-busting” – or thrombolytic – medication.

On average, someone in the United States suffers a stroke every 40 seconds, and nearly 800,000 people suffer a new or recurrent stroke each year. Stroke is an emergency, and immediate treatment can limit brain damage, save lives and increase chances of a full recovery. In the situation of ischemic stroke, a thrombolytic agent or “clot buster” medication in the veins can be given within the first four and a half hours of the onset of stroke symptoms. For the most severe strokes caused by large blood clots, thrombectomy is a highly effective procedure utilized within hours after a stroke starts, but it can only be offered at specialized centers. For these patients and those with bleeding in the brain, getting to these hospitals as quickly as possible can make the difference between life and death, and between disability and no disability.

If you think someone is having a stroke dial 9-1-1 immediately and remember the BE FAST method to evaluate whether someone may be having a stroke:

- **Balance:** Watch for a sudden loss of balance.
- **Eyes:** Is there a sudden loss of vision in one or both eyes? Or double vision?
- **Face:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?
- **Arms:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- **Speech:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?
- **Time:** If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately



With a stroke, every minute counts. Only an estimated 36% of people in the U.S. know even one of the signs of a stroke. This is why passage of Senate Bill 20 is so important. This legislation will promote awareness of stroke and help save lives across Ohio. Once again, Cleveland Clinic voices its support for the passage of SB 20, and is thankful to its sponsors, Senator Manning and Senator Antonio for introducing this legislation.