

Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my support for Senate Bill 21. As a stroke survivor, I'd like to thank Senators Antonio and Manning for their work on this important legislation.

On the day I suffered my stroke, it was the fourth day in a row I had a debilitating headache with neck pain. Later that evening, my husband and I were sitting on the couch together, when all of a sudden, I heard a loud pop in my head, followed by the sound of a sizzle that completely filled my head. I was terrified. I tried to tell my husband, but found that I physically could not move or speak at all. After about 10 very long seconds, I could finally gain control over my body again, and attempted to speak. My words were real words, but incredibly jumbled up. I finally managed to say "hospital".

I was taken to a level three hospital where I sat in the ER waiting for a CT scan. Almost 20 minutes later, I was whisked away to my CT scan where I was diagnosed with blood clots in my carotid artery and prefrontal cortex. The doctors told my husband at the time that I must be taken to a level one hospital because due to the damage in my brain due to loss of perfusion, I may die. 45 minutes after my arrival, an ambulance took me to the nearest level one hospital where I spent three hours undergoing thrombectomies that were said to normally take an hour.

But it was too late, the damage was too deep. Not only could they not remove the clots due to fear of further damage, but I had also now completely lost the abilities to speak, move, read, and write- and was completely trapped inside of my own body- only able to move my eyes. My surgeons said that if I had just been even a minute later, I would not be here today.

Losing everything a month after turning 30 years old and living in the ICU for over a month was devastating. The severity of the damage was because I was not able to receive TPA, and not able to get into an OR fast enough. Luckily, after spending over a year in intensive speech, occupational, and physical therapy, I have worked to regain a new life.

Senate Bill 21 is a critical piece of legislation for improved care for stroke patients. With stroke, time is brain and getting a patient to the appropriate hospital to provide care without the need for additional transports will save lives and improve outcomes for patients. I urge the committee to favorably vote on this legislation.