



State Senator Nickie J. Antonio
District 23

Senate Health Committee
June 1, 2022
Sponsor Testimony SB 305

Good morning Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Antani and members of the Senate Health Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 305, which would designate May as ‘Ohio Stroke Awareness Month.’

Every 40 seconds, someone in the United States has a stroke¹. The proper treatment can mean the difference between life and death. Additionally, stroke is the 5th leading cause of death and a leading cause of disability in Ohio.² Unfortunately, strokes are a health concern that can happen to anyone and have touched many, if not all, of our lives; I know because I am one of them. This year marks 23 years since my mother passed away from complications of a stroke at the age of 71. Since I have been in the legislature, I have worked to lessen such a crushing loss for other families through proactive policies.

It’s a common misconception that only older people or people with risk factors suffer strokes, such as those with a family history or history of tobacco use. However, Kodi Pride, an occupational therapist from Twinsburg, suffered one at the age of 41. I’d like to share a bit of her story.

“On Friday, February 13, 2015, after days of experiencing a nagging headache, Kodi suffered indescribable pain. Focused on completing work and providing therapy for her patients at the critical care hospital where she worked, she took another Sudafed and a Motrin to complete her day and lessen her pain. However, nothing seemed to shake this headache -- which she believed was from her sinuses. Once the headache intensified, she decided to leave work early. Her coworker stated she sounded funny. She continued to inquire and then had her rehab manager, who is a speech therapist, assess her. They called the Director of Nursing and agreed she needed to go directly to an acute hospital because of her symptoms. Once she arrived at the hospital, she was immediately triaged and told she was having a stroke.

Finally, she was admitted under an amazing physician who was patient and whose concern for her was palpable. She was blessed to have family and friends who were able to provide her information to the medical team. She was left with his words: “It was a transient ischemic attack (TIA), but

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Stroke Facts. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/stroke/facts.htm>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/ohio/ohio.htm>

probably such a small clot we can't visualize. You need to take it easy but will be okay". With tears in her eyes and no words to utter, she shook her head in disbelief. "Take it easy?"

Fast forward seven years later, she is well. She has not had any neurological impairments or infarcts. She is grateful for her full recovery and recognizes the importance of knowing the signs and symptoms of stroke no matter one's age, gender, or demographics. She thought she was a healthy 34-year-old woman who was balancing a full life like most working moms.

Overall, we must inform people that strokes, TIAs, hemorrhagic or ischemic, can happen to anyone at any time. She thought she was too young, too healthy -- but she wasn't. There have been many fears to overcome since that incident: her children were afraid, her family and friends were concerned, her life insurance was affected, and her confidence was altered. Today, she can speak and be understood.

Kodi hopes that her advocating for all TIA/STROKE awareness will give a voice to those who didn't regain their speech. All survivors are not the same, but neither is the stroke."

When someone is experiencing a stroke, every single second counts. Raising public awareness is crucial in educating people on symptoms of stroke that might lead to earlier detections and better health outcomes for patients, including the acronym FAST. It stands for:

F- Face- Do you notice one side of their face drooping? Ask them to smile.

A- Arms- Are they experiencing weakness in one arm? If they raise both arms does one drift down?

S- Speech- Is speech slurred, unable to speak or hard to understand? Can they repeat a short sentence? Does what they are saying make sense?

T- Time to get help - If you notice any of these symptoms, call 911 to get the person to the hospital immediately.

National Stroke Awareness Month is observed in the United States annually during the month of May. This legislation will complement national efforts and help save lives across our state by promoting awareness of stroke symptoms and causes in the hopes that we may reduce the incidence of stroke across our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have at this time.