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January 23, 2020

Senator Geoffrey Gratwick, Chair  
Representative Patricia Hymanson, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

**Re: LD 304 - An Act To Improve Stroke Care in Maine**

Dear Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson, and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

This letter is in response to the request for an update on the public health programs and activities related to stroke prevention, education, and treatment. The Committee voted Ought Not To Pass on LD 304 to give the Department time to determine the most appropriate methods to advance the goals of legislation. The bill would have created a stroke coordinator position within the Department; funded education efforts to inform Mainers of the causes, signs, and symptoms of stroke; and improved surveillance and epidemiology efforts of the Maine CDC.

Maine's stroke prevention efforts are centered in the Maine CDC's Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Program (DCDPP) in the Division of Disease Prevention.

On September 30, 2018, the U.S. CDC awarded a five-year cooperative agreement to the CDPCP, titled, *Improving the Health of Americans through Prevention and Management of Diabetes and Heart Disease and Stroke*. This five-year cooperative agreement provides funding to the CDPCP to reduce the prevalence of diabetes, heart disease, and stroke by focusing efforts on evidence-based prevention strategies to decrease known risk factors associated with these diseases. This agreement funds six full time positions at the Maine CDC, two of which focus exclusively on heart disease and stroke prevention. Additionally, funds also help support contracts with MaineCare Health Homes and Federally Qualified Health Centers to partner with CDPCP to meet deliverables and achieve objectives.

Deliverables under this agreement include the following:

- Promote the adoption and use of electronic health records and health information technology to improve provider outcomes and patient health outcomes related to identification of individuals with undiagnosed hypertension and management of adults with hypertension.
- Promote the adoption of evidence-based quality measurements at the provider level to monitor health care disparities and implement activities to eliminate these disparities.

- Support engagement of non-physician team members (i.e. nurses, physical therapists) in hypertension and cholesterol management in clinical settings.
- Facilitate the use of self-measured blood pressure monitoring, with clinical support, among adults with hypertension.
- Implement systems to facilitate systematic referral of adults with hypertension and/or high blood cholesterol to community programs/resources.
  - Cardiovascular disease risk reduction includes stroke prevention. Efforts reflect the following:
    - Increasing the hypertension control rate by identifying and managing patients with hypertension;
    - Increasing the number of adults prescribed statins to control high blood cholesterol;
    - Facilitating the use of non-physician team members in the management of hypertension and hyperlipidemia;
    - Facilitating the use of self-measured blood pressure monitoring to confirm diagnosis and effectiveness of medication therapy; and
    - Facilitating systems to support clinical community linkages that support management of hypertension and hyperlipidemia.

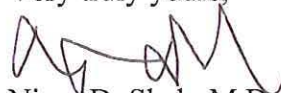
Additionally, the DCDPP is revising and relaunching the Maine CDC Cardiovascular Health [website](#), which includes:

- Information on stroke, risk factors, and signs and symptoms;
- Know Your Numbers national campaign;
- Sodium Reduction national campaign;
- Links to various stroke resources and messaging; and
- Provider materials including healthcare interventions and resources.

Stroke is a leading cause of death in the U.S. and the state of Maine ([2018](#)). Efforts to prevent stroke are focused on improving care for patients in the clinical setting and self-management through education of risk factors, and lifestyle modifications. Education about stroke symptoms and early detection continue to be important because early treatment leads to better outcomes for those affected by stroke.

We will continue to maximize our public health initiatives to optimize health for the people of Maine.

Very truly yours,



Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D., Director  
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention