



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

News Release

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CONTACT: [Chloe Scott](#)
Public Affairs Specialist, 301-600-2590

Spanish-language Stroke Awareness Campaign Launched *Campaign Urges Residents to Call 911, AHORA!*

FREDERICK, Md. – Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater today unveiled a county-wide Spanish-language campaign to raise awareness in the Spanish-speaking community about stroke signs, symptoms, and the importance of calling 911 immediately. The campaign is part of the administration's ongoing commitment to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities.

Stroke is a leading cause of death and disability in Maryland and Frederick County. According to the Frederick County Health Department, in 2022, 25% of people arriving at local hospitals with stroke symptoms came in time to receive treatment. The county aims to increase that number to 40% by the end of 2024. Many people do not recognize the signs of a stroke or the urgency of seeking medical attention. This campaign raises awareness in the Spanish-speaking community within the county.

"Frederick County became the first 'Stroke Smart' county in Maryland earlier this year and I am proud that we are expanding the reach of that campaign by providing the campaign in Spanish," County Executive Jessica Fitzwater said. "With Spanish being the second most commonly spoken language, it is vital for us to have inclusive educational materials when working to improve health outcomes. My Administration remains committed to addressing access and language barriers for all residents."

This Spanish-language campaign can be found on the website at FrederickCountyMD.gov/Stroke and includes information on the signs and symptoms of a stroke and actions to take—call 911! A short public services announcement (PSA) video is available for people to view, along with training material and a quiz to confirm that the key points have been learned. The PSA [video](#) introduces a mnemonic tool, AHORA, to help Spanish-speaking individuals identify and remember the common signs of stroke and what to do. Ahora is the Spanish word for "now." AHORA stands for:

- Andar (walking)
- Hablar (speech)
- Ojos (eyes)
- Rostro (face)
- Ambos Brazos o Piernas (both arms and legs)

If someone has trouble with any of these functions, they may be having a stroke and need to call 911 right away. The PSA advises callers to say the word "stroke" in English for rapid communication with the 911 call center responder, especially if there is an English barrier or limitation with language.

The educational materials developed feature the importance of community participation in this project. Members of Frederick County's Spanish community contributed to this PSA and training materials, which are culturally relevant and designed to resonate with the Spanish-speaking community.



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www.FrederickCountyMD.gov

In collaboration with Frederick Health and the Frederick County Health Department, “We are excited to launch this campaign and raise awareness about stroke in the Spanish-speaking community,” said Kathy Schey, Director of the Frederick County Division of Aging and Independence. “We believe that this initiative will help save lives and improve health outcomes for our residents.”

“Frederick County urges everyone to learn the signs of stroke and act immediately, even if symptoms have gone away. Every second counts when someone has a stroke, and calling 911 AHORA can make the difference,” said Sandra Sanchez, Public Affairs Specialist of the Frederick County Office of County Executive and Office of Communication and Public Engagement.

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