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## **Media Release**

### **York Central Hospital's District Stroke Centre Celebrates Stroke Awareness Day**

Richmond Hill, ON: Do you know the five warning signs of stroke? The five warning signs according to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada are: Weakness - Sudden loss of strength or sudden numbness in the face, arm or leg, even if temporary; Trouble speaking - Sudden difficulty speaking or understanding or sudden confusion, even if temporary; Vision problems - Sudden trouble with vision, even if temporary; Headache - Sudden severe and unusual headache and Dizziness - Sudden loss of balance, especially with any of the above signs. If you or someone close to you has these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately. Help is available.

York Central Hospital is the District Stroke Centre for York Region, offering enhanced preventative, emergency and stroke rehabilitation services for residents of York Region and beyond.

“York Central Hospital is proud to play a leadership role in the coordinated response of the care of stroke patients in York Region,” says Bruce Harber, President and CEO of York Central Hospital. “Our achievements in this area are a credit to the many partners who have come together to create a seamless response to the care of patients who experience a stroke in our region.”

Between 40,000 to 50,000 suffer strokes in Canada each year and there are approximately 300,000 Canadians currently living with the effects of stroke. As part of the province of Ontario's initiative to increase access to Stroke Care, District Stroke Centres have been set up across Ontario. The District Stroke Centre for York Region is located at York Central Hospital. The Centre's objective is to provide coordinated stroke services with other health care providers in the area to ensure optimal care for current and future stroke patients and their families. The Centre provides: stroke education, prevention, coordinates acute care, rehabilitation, home care and long term care for stroke patients.

“According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, stroke is the third leading cause of mortality in Canada, accounting for 14,000 deaths every year,” says Susan Fyfe Director, York Central District Stroke Centre. “It doesn't have to be this way. If people learn to recognize the warnings signs of stroke and call 9-1-1 when they realize they have these symptoms we would be able to treat or even prevent many strokes from happening.”

## What is Stroke?

A stroke is a sudden loss of brain function. Stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off. Without oxygen-rich blood, brain cells begin to die. If the blood supply is not restored, the affected part of the brain dies, causing disability and death.

The effects of a stroke depend on where the brain was injured, as well as how much damage occurred. A stroke can impact any number of areas including your ability to move, see, remember, speak, reason and read and write.

### Risk factors you can do something about:

- ♣ High blood pressure (hypertension)
- ♣ High blood cholesterol
- ♣ Heart disease atrial fibrillation
- ♣ Diabetes
- ♣ Being overweight
- ♣ Excessive alcohol consumption
- ♣ Physical inactivity
- ♣ Smoking
- ♣ Stress
- ♣ Women's unique risk factors

### Risk factors you can't control:

- ♣ Age
- ♣ Gender
- ♣ Family History
- ♣ Ethnicity
- ♣ History of stroke or TIA

York Central Hospital's District Stroke Centre is the Region's centre of excellence in stroke care.

- In 2007/2008, York Central Hospital had 385 patients come to the Emergency Department for stroke. Of these 34 were treated with tPA which is a clot busting drug for stroke with good patient outcomes. This drug is not beneficial to every patient, and it must be administered within 3 hours of the beginning of a stroke to be effective. In York Region is only available at York Central Hospital.
- The Centre has a stroke specialist on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- The District Stroke Centre has trained York Region EMS personnel and partners from our community hospital partners, Markham Stouffville Hospital and Southlake Regional Health Centre to recognize the signs and symptoms of stroke. If staff from these facilities suspect that a patient has or is suffering from a stroke, and could benefit from tPA, they send all stroke patients directly to York Central Hospital to be assessed for this treatment.

**Heart and Stroke Foundation's Big Bike**

As part of the Hospital's Stroke Awareness Day, the Hospital is pleased to host the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Big Bike. The Big Bike Event for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada is expected to raise more than \$15,000 for Heart and Stroke Research. Big Bike is one of the Heart and Stroke Foundation's most FUN-raising fundraising events. Causing a commotion wherever it goes, the event is named after the 30-seat bicycle that teams of enthusiastic riders pedal through 200 communities across nine provinces – raising funds, attention and laughs along the way.

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