

Gov. Pritzker Signs Legislation Strengthening Treatment for Strokes in Illinois

by Michael Claffey
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CHICAGO – Governor JB Pritzker signed legislation on June 30 designed to improve care for people who suffer from strokes in Illinois. HB 2238 authorizes the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to recognize a new level of certification that

hospitals can voluntarily seek for treating stroke victims. The measure will help ensure patients who need care during or after a stroke can be sent to hospitals that provide the appropriate level of care. The bill was sponsored in the House by State Representative Barbara Hernandez (D-Aurora), Assistant Majority Leader, and in the Senate by State Senator Laura Ellman (D-Naperville).

“Strokes kill thousands of Illinoisans each year and can cause debilitating damage for those who survive them,” Governor JB Pritzker said. “This legislation will encourage our world class hospitals to upgrade the care they provide for stroke victims with the goal of saving as many lives as possible and helping patients recover and continue to lead fulfilling lives.”

Illinois currently has three levels of designation for hospitals that provide stroke care. The highest is Comprehensive Stroke Center (of which there are 17), followed by Primary Stroke Center (59) and Acute Stroke Ready Hospital (81). The new legislation provides a higher level of care than the existing Primary Stroke Center, but below the level highest level of Comprehensive Stroke Center. This new designation can be referred to by three names: Thrombectomy Capable Stroke Center, Thrombectomy Ready Stroke Center, or Primary Stroke Center Plus.

“This legislation will encourage hospitals across Illinois to upgrade the level of care they provide to stroke victims,” said Rep. Hernandez.

“I am very pleased to work with IDPH on this legislation that is intended to improve access to effective care for stroke victims across Illinois,” said Senator Ellman.

“I applaud Governor Pritzker for signing HB 2238 and the two authors of this legislation, Rep. Hernandez and Senator Ellman, for their leadership and partnership to address and improve stroke care in Illinois,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra.

“This important legislation allows our state to align with the most up-to-date recommendations of national accreditation bodies and provides IDPH the ability to designate a new level of stroke care to certain participating hospitals.”

According to IDPH data, stroke, or cerebrovascular disease, was the fifth highest cause of death for Illinoisans in 2021, with a total of 6,768 deaths recorded.

Under the nationally accredited Thrombectomy Ready Stroke certification, patients will receive all of the services currently offered at a nationally accredited Primary Stroke Center plus these additional services:

- Interventional thrombectomy (a procedure to remove blood clots) 24/7
- 24/7 lab and CT (computerized tomography) capabilities

- Thrombolytic therapy to ischemic patients as appropriate
- Working agreements with Comprehensive Stroke Centers, Primary Stroke Centers and Acute Stroke Ready Hospitals for a higher level of care when needed
- Advanced interventional capabilities available within two hours 24/7
- Dedicated ICU
- Community stroke education twice annually
- Working and transfer agreements with EMS
- Stroke education to staff and EMS.
- To find a stroke center in Illinois, click [HERE](#).