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County Executive

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Office of Women's Services

The Suffolk County Executive's Office of Women's Services

Between Us Women

"empowering women through awareness and education"

First Ladies of Power Gather to End Stroke

MAY 2008

Special points of interest:

- May is Stroke Awareness Month
- Join the Cause become a Power to End Stroke Ambassador
- For details about the Power to End Stroke program, log on to

www.StrokeAssociation.org/power

or call 1-888-4-STROKE.

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On April 19 at Farmingdale State University, the Suffolk County Executive's Office of Women's Services teamed up with the American Stroke Association for its own version of the "power brunch"—a delicious, heart-healthy meal and multimedia presentation attended by some 50 women.

Power To End Stroke is an education and awareness campaign that embraces and celebrates the culture, energy, creativity and lifestyles of African Americans. It unites African Americans to help make an impact on the high incidence of stroke within the community.

This event, which was cosponsored by Suffolk's Office of Minority Health and Nassau's Department of Health, was aimed at "first ladies," ministers and ministers' wives in the Suffolk and Nassau County minority community. African-Americans have almost twice the risk of first-ever strokes as whites, and blacks age 35 to 54 have four times the risk of stroke .

Each participant was given an informational packet—including a healthy soul-food cookbook—to bring back and share with her congregation and community. It is hoped that this faith-based networking and sharing will help raise awareness of stroke risk among friends and neighbors, and that more Suffolk residents will see their health providers and discuss how to minimize their stroke risk.

"How many ladies here have a close relative

who had a stroke?" asked Dr. Veronica Henry of Hollywood Baptist Church. For answer, half the attendees stood up.



From the left: Dr. Veronica Henry, Joanne Kuplicki, Patti Eaton, Deanna Marshall, Dr. Humayun Chaudhry, Dr. Margaret Sukhram, Dr. Maria Torroella

Dr. Henry led a Power Ambassador pinning ceremony, in which all women were encouraged to acknowledge their "power to end stroke."

Speakers included Deanna Marshall, Director of the Office of Women's Services and a Power Ambassador herself; Gladys Ayala-Borjas, senior regional director of cultural health initiatives for the American Stroke Association; Dr. Humayun Chaudhry, Suffolk County Health Commissioner; and Dr. Maria Torroella Carney, Nassau County Health Commissioner. [\(to page 2\)](#)

For Breast Health, Follow the Finns to Sleep

For reasons not fully understood, the more sleep you get, the more sharply your risk of developing breast cancer may drop.

According to a cohort study conducted in Finland* between 1975 and 1996, the hazard ratios for breast cancer among 12,222 women

were 1.1 or slightly above average in the light sleepers (6 hours or less), the average of 1.0 among average-duration sleepers (7-8 hours) and 0.28—significantly below average—for those who slept 9 hours or longer.

A cohort study follows the same study participants over

a long period of years, retesting the participants at set intervals over time. Sleep data was provided in 1975 and 1981, and results measured only those respondents whose sleep patterns were unchanged across the period.

The theory is [\(to page 2\)](#)



Networking and Fellowship at the First Ladies Brunch

First Ladies of Power Gather to End Stroke (continued)

The stroke presentation was given by Dr. Jacqueline Delmont, medical director of Primary Healthcare Plus and of Backstretch Clinic. Maredia Warren from the American Heart Association presented the "You Are the Power" video.

The invocation was delivered by Bishop Stephanie B. Riddle-Green from the Joshua Baptist Cathedral in Huntington. Rev. Antipas Harris from A-7 Gospel provided vocal entertainment.

Participants learned that there are several risk factors for stroke, some of which one is born with and some of which can be changed.

Family history, race, sex, age and prior stroke or heart attack are factors more or less set in stone. The rest—high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, carotid or other artery disease, obesity, inactivity, cholesterol, and alcohol or drug use—one can do something about.



Warning signs of stroke are: sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg; sudden confusion or trouble speaking, dizziness, loss of balance,

sudden severe headache, sudden trouble seeing, sudden trouble walking. If even one of these symptoms appears, call 911.

Quick response—within the first three hours after a stroke starts—can make all the difference

If you want to become a Power to End Stroke Ambassador in Long Island / Queens contact: Gladys Ayala-Borjas (212) 878-5915

gayala-borjas@heart.org

Is it possible to sleep your way to breast health? Study conducted in Finland seems to say "yes."

For Breast Health, Follow the Finns to Sleep (continued)

that longer sleepers produce more melatonin. Melatonin is a hormone which is made by the pineal gland and released into circulation at nighttime. The hormone has anticarcinogenic properties. Its production is also suppressed by light (which is in line with other research suggesting links between insomnia or nighttime work and breast cancer).

For this study, breast cancer incidence was controlled for smoking, age, income, number

of children, alcohol use, body mass index, use of birth control, white- or blue-collar work, and frequency of exercise.

Oddly, the other finding of this study concludes that short sleepers—who are more likely to be older, sedentary, drink more alcoholic beverages, smoke, and to rate their own sleep quality as "poor"—have nearly the same breast cancer risk as average 8-hour-a-night

sleepers.

*The Finnish Twin Cohort, a study of more than 32,000 twins born before 1958.

Source: Pia K. Verkasalo et al., "Sleep Duration and Breast Cancer: A Prospective Cohort Study," American Association for Cancer Research Journals, 2005.



Mothers' Room Opens at MacArthur Airport

April 30 was the official opening day for a unique new waiting room at Long Island MacArthur Airport: a space designed specifically for use by nursing mothers.

The brainchild of the Suffolk Perinatal Coalition (SPC), the idea came up at a breast-feeding conference last October. Space for the breast feeding room was donated by Southwest Airlines. Lori

Green R.N., a member of the SPC Breast feeding committee solicited donations from Suffolk County, the Town of Islip, the sorority Delta Sigma Theta Inc.-Suffolk County Alumnae Chapter an organization dedicated to public service, the Long Island Doula Association, Splashes of Hope, and Babies R Us who chipped in with resources and direction.

According to *Newsday*, MacArthur is one of the few airports in the country to offer such a facility. It's located past the passenger checkpoint, en route to the food court.

Among the other local media attending the Mothers' Day opening were News 12, the *Islip Bulletin* and the *Suffolk County News*.

Women and HIV/AIDS: Snapshot of an Epidemic

According to a fact sheet released in May 2008 by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, women make up 27 percent of new AIDS diagnoses (2006 numbers), a proportion that has held steady since 2000.

Women of color, particularly black women, are disproportionately affected—they account for 66% of new cases among women age 13 and up, and have a case rate of 40.4 per 100,000 or 21 times the rate for white women (1.9 per 100,000).

Other findings:

Most AIDS diagnoses among women across all ethnic groups are due to heterosexual transmission (73 percent in 2006) followed by injection drug use (24 percent).

Most women with AIDS were diagnosed between ages 25 and 44 (71 percent). In 2005,

teen girls represented 43 percent of new AIDS cases.

In 2004, HIV was the third leading cause of death among black women age 25-44 (fifth cause of death for all women in that age range).

New York State led the nation in sheer number of women living with AIDS, but the District of Columbia has the highest female AIDS case rate (104.1 cases per 100,000 compared to the national rate of 8.2).

Women with HIV/AIDS are more likely to be low-income.

76 percent of women with HIV/AIDS receiving medical care have children under age 18 living at home. The implication here is that these mothers may be less able to manage care of their own illness because of their caregiving responsibilities to others.

Women with HIV are less likely to receive combination therapy, and more likely to postpone care because they lack transportation (26%) or were too sick to go to the doctor (23%) than men are (12% and 14% respectively).

Women with HIV receiving care are more likely than men to be covered by Medicaid (61% vs. 39%); men are more likely to be privately insured (36% of men vs. 14% of women).

Sources: The Centers for Disease Control; American Journal of Public Health.

To learn more about the Suffolk Regional Anonymous HIV Counseling and Testing Program, call 631-851-3650 or 1-800-462-6786.



More than three-quarters of women with HIV/AIDS who are under a doctor's care have children under age 18 living at home. This may complicate their ability to care for themselves.

Suffolk County's Police Athletic League are offering the free Ident-a-Kid program on Thursday evenings, 4-6 p.m., in the lobby of Suffolk County Police headquarters, 30 Yaphank Avenue, Yaphank. The child ID packet includes safety tips, emergency contact info, medical history, photo of child, DNA sample and thumbprints. For details call PAL at 631-852-6109.

Suffolk County Women's Hall Of Fame Awards

The deadline has passed for entries to the Suffolk County Annual Women's Hall of Fame awards. Now as the Office of Women's Services awaits County Executive Steve Levy's final selections based on our judges' recommendations, planning is under way for the awards dinner.

The gala event will be held at Windows on the Lake, 235 Lake Shore Road, Lake Ronkonkoma, from 6 to 10 p.m. on Wednesday, July 9. For details or ticket inquiries, call the Office of Women's Services at (631) 853-8284 or send an e-mail to grace.ioannidis@suffolkcountyny.gov



Judge Ann Wood 1994



Lorraine Pace 1995



Lilian Frankish 1996



Dr. Mary Haddock 1997



Judy Anne Acker 1998



Shirley Ann Kinyon 1999



Margaret Pitt 2006



Judge Marion F. McElroy 2006



Pam Raymond 2006



Colleen Lefroy 2006



Donna Cohen 2007



Karen Livingston 2007



Marie Kennedy 2007



Susan Bergman 2007



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Visit us on the web at:
www.suffolkcountyny.gov

What is Women's Services?

The Suffolk County Executive's Office of Women's Services is a county agency that serves women in all walks of life, at all times and passages in their lives. This is done through a number of services; most are free, and all are available to everyone.

Women constitute over 51 percent of the population of Suffolk County. They are the majority population in every age group over 30. Many of these women are "head of households." Any and all programs or services designed to empower the women of Suffolk County have a direct impact, not only on the woman, but also on the entire family, particularly the children.

The Women's Helpline is available from 9:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Helpline offers information, referrals to resources for further help and emotional support. The Helpline is bilingual. Calls can be anonymous and confidentiality is respected.

Helpline: (631) 853-8222

Info about Postpartum Depression

In case you missed it, April was Postpartum Depression Month—so named as a prompt for health agencies to raise awareness of this issue.

Postpartum depression is a general term that describes a range of mood disorders that new mothers may feel. (Actress Brooke Shields drew attention to this condition in a book she wrote a couple of years back.)

It's a condition that affects at least one in 10 new mothers, with symptoms that range from mild to severe.

According to information put out by the Postpartum Resource Center of New York, Inc., symptoms include frequent crying, sleep disturbances (not enough sleep, or

too much), appetite disruptions, panic attacks, feelings of guilt and worthlessness, irritability, loss of interest in things the mother used to enjoy, and either lack of concern for the baby's well-being or excessive concern for the baby. Postpartum depression also shows itself in a fear of harming the baby or oneself.

It's not yet known what causes postpartum depression, but it's believed to result from the dramatic change in hormone levels new mothers experience, the stress of motherhood, lack of sleep, and a family history or prior personal history of depression.

Note: The "baby blues," which between 60 and 80 percent of women get, isn't

considered to be postpartum depression, as real as the feelings can be. Baby blues involve irritability, being tired or weepy, and feeling sad—a moodiness that lasts only a couple of days.

Treatment is available, and ideally includes a combination of physical, psychotherapeutic and talk therapy treatments (such as participation in a support group).

Help and more information is available by calling the Postpartum Resource Center of New York at 631-422-2255. Or, check out their website at www.postpartumNY.org.



Recent research has shown that up to 10% of pregnant women will experience depression/anxiety. Women with these symptoms are at risk for postpartum depression. It is important to speak with your healthcare provider to get treatment during pregnancy and put together a postpartum plan.