American Stroke Month, Template LTE for May 2015

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Dear Editor,

May is American Stroke Month, a national observance to educate individuals on how up to 80% of strokes can be prevented. Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S., and occurs when blood flow in the brain is interrupted, initiating a loss of brain function.

Quitting smoking, or never starting in the first place, is one of the best ways to prevent stroke.

According to the 2014 U.S. Surgeon General’s Report, smoking increases the risk for stroke, and individuals that smoke are more likely to die of stroke than former smokers or people who never smoked. The report also finds that secondhand smoke can also cause strokes in non-smokers.

Reducing your risk of stroke is just one reason to avoid smoking. Other benefits include **(LIST EXAMPLES FROM** [**http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\_statistics/fact\_sheets/cessation/quitting/index.htm#benefits**](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/cessation/quitting/index.htm#benefits)**)**

In addition to quitting smoking, here are some other things you can do to reduce your risk of stroke **(INCLUDE EXAMPLES FROM** [**http://www.stroke.org/understand-stroke/preventing-stroke/lifestyle-risk-factors**](http://www.stroke.org/understand-stroke/preventing-stroke/lifestyle-risk-factors)**).**

It’s never too late to quit, and free help is available through the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT NOW. For more on how the **(COALITION NAME)** is reducing tobacco use in **(COMMUNITY/COUNTY)**, **VISIT/CALL PHONE NUMBER/URL/SOCIAL MEDIA, ETC.**