



About Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming

Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming is a statewide initiative designed to strengthen stroke care across the entire continuum—from symptom recognition and emergency response to hospital treatment, rehabilitation and recovery. By connecting hospitals, EMS agencies, rehabilitation providers, public health leaders and community partners, the initiative will help ensure more Wyoming residents receive timely, evidence-based care, regardless of where they live.

Why is this initiative needed?

- Nearly half of Wyoming residents live an hour or more from the nearest hospital, creating significant challenges for receiving time-sensitive stroke treatment.
- Stroke is the fifth-leading cause of death in Wyoming and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability.
- In 2024, nearly 250 Wyoming residents died from stroke, while many more experienced life-altering physical, cognitive and emotional effects.
- Because every minute matters during a stroke, improving coordination across the healthcare system can help save lives, reduce disability and improve recovery outcomes.

What is a stroke?

A stroke occurs when blood flow to part of the brain is interrupted, either by a clot blocking a blood vessel (ischemic stroke) or by a ruptured blood vessel causing bleeding in the brain (hemorrhagic stroke). Without oxygen-rich blood, brain cells begin to die within minutes.

Stroke is a leading cause of serious long-term disability and one of the leading causes of death in Wyoming. Recognizing stroke symptoms and seeking emergency treatment immediately can significantly improve chances of survival and recovery.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Mission: Lifeline Stroke?

Mission: Lifeline Stroke is a guideline-driven, data-based program designed to improve stroke systems of care. The initiative connects each component of stroke care into an integrated system that promotes evidence-based treatment, measures performance, identifies gaps and supports continuous quality improvement.

The stroke system of care begins when stroke symptoms are recognized in the community and extends through emergency response, hospital treatment, rehabilitation and long-term recovery.

Mission: Lifeline Stroke brings together hospitals, EMS agencies, first responders, emergency communications centers, rehabilitation providers, public health officials, government partners and other stakeholders to create a coordinated stroke system that improves patient outcomes and saves lives.

What is the Goal of Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming?

Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming aims to strengthen the statewide system of care that supports stroke patients from the moment symptoms begin through rehabilitation and recovery.

By bringing together hospitals, EMS agencies, rehabilitation providers, public health leaders and government partners, the initiative will help more Wyoming residents receive the right care at the right time, improving outcomes and helping people return to their families, workplaces and communities after stroke. The initiative is particularly focused on reducing barriers to timely stroke care in Wyoming's rural and frontier communities.

Why focus on stroke recovery and rehabilitation?

While rapid treatment is essential, recovery after stroke can continue for months or even years. Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming is designed to improve outcomes across the entire patient journey, including rehabilitation and long-term recovery. By strengthening access to rehabilitation services and standardizing post-acute care, the initiative aims to help more stroke survivors regain function, improve quality of life and successfully return to their families, workplaces and communities.

What benefits will Wyoming residents see?

Through Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming, residents will benefit from:

- Increased public awareness of stroke symptoms, risk factors and the importance of calling 911 immediately
- Enhanced EMS training and standardized stroke assessment, triage and transport protocols
- Improved coordination among hospitals and stroke care providers across the state
- Faster access to specialized stroke expertise through established transfer and treatment networks
- Greater access to high-quality rehabilitation and recovery services
- Evidence-based, standardized care across the continuum of stroke treatment and recovery
- Expanded use of data-driven quality improvement programs to monitor and improve patient outcomes
- Stronger statewide collaboration focused on long-term stroke care, recovery and sustainability

Why is this important for Wyoming?

Where someone lives should not determine their chances of surviving and recovering from a stroke.

Because Wyoming's population is spread across vast rural and frontier communities, many residents face longer travel times to emergency and specialized stroke care. Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming will strengthen coordination among EMS agencies, hospitals, specialists and rehabilitation providers to help ensure patients receive the most appropriate care as quickly as possible, giving them the best chance for survival and recovery.

What are the warning signs of a stroke?

Remember the acronym **B.E. F.A.S.T.**

B – Balance: Sudden loss of balance or coordination.

E – Eyes: Sudden vision changes or trouble seeing in one or both eyes.

F – Face drooping: Does one side of the face droop or feel numb?

A – Arm weakness: Is one arm weak or numb?

S – Speech difficulty: Is speech slurred or difficult to understand?

T – Time to call 911: If any of these symptoms are present, call 911 immediately, even if symptoms go away.

Every minute matters during a stroke because millions of brain cells can be lost each minute treatment is delayed.

How is Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming funded?

The American Heart Association has announced a statewide commitment of \$5.2 million to support Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming. The initiative is anchored by a \$4.5 million grant from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust and an additional commitment from the American Heart Association.

How long will funding last?

The funding will support a three-year implementation period from 2027 through 2030.

Investments will focus on:

- EMS education and infrastructure
- Hospital quality improvement programs
- Stroke system coordination
- Rehabilitation and recovery services
- Public awareness and community education

The current grant period concludes June 30, 2030.

How will success be measured?

Participating hospitals will use the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Registry to track stroke patient care from first medical contact through hospital discharge. Registry data will help:

- Measure adherence to evidence-based guidelines
- Identify opportunities for improvement
- Support statewide quality improvement efforts
- Track performance and patient outcomes

- Guide education and system enhancements

What is the history of Mission: Lifeline Stroke?

Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming builds upon more than a decade of successful collaboration between the American Heart Association and The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust.

Helmsley-supported Mission: Lifeline STEMI and Stroke initiatives have been implemented in multiple rural states, including Hawai'i, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.

These initiatives have successfully strengthened statewide systems of care through:

- Clinical education and training
- Evidence-based protocols and guidelines
- Improved coordination among healthcare providers
- Public awareness campaigns
- Data-driven quality improvement efforts

With the addition of Mission: Lifeline Stroke Wyoming, Helmsley has committed more than \$100 million to support American Heart Association Mission: Lifeline initiatives across rural America.