Knowledge of stroke signs and symptoms in New York State adults increased following a stroke awareness media campaign.

**Quick facts:**

- Between 2006 and 2009, a stroke awareness media campaign educated New Yorkers about common signs and symptoms of stroke and the need to call 9-1-1 at the first sign of stroke using the simple, easy to remember acronym, FAST: drooping Face, weak Arm, slurred or confused Speech, and Time (time is critical; call 911 immediately). The FAST campaign was coordinated in regions throughout upstate New York in partnership with emergency medical services, hospitals and local health departments.

- An evaluation showed the campaign was successful in increasing intention to call 9-1-1 for stroke symptoms in one region of New York State (NYS) (not shown).

- Between 2005 and 2009, the percent of NYS adults recognizing all FAST elements increased from 71.7% in 2005 to 79.3% in 2009 (see Figure 1). The largest increases were among non-Hispanic black adults and Hispanic adults (see Figure 2).

**Public health importance:**

- On average, every 40 seconds, someone in the United States has a stroke. In 2009 there were over 50,000 hospitalizations due to stroke in NYS.

- Eligible stroke patients who receive treatment within 3 hours of the first signs of a stroke have a reduced risk of death and disability.

- People experiencing stroke, and bystanders who witness stroke, may not consider the signs and symptoms to be serious and delay seeking care. This delay in recognizing the seriousness of stroke symptoms is one of the major barriers to receiving the most effective time sensitive treatments for stroke.

- Increased recognition of the signs and symptoms of stroke and the need to use emergency transport (9-1-1) for stroke should translate to more people arriving at hospitals in time to receive life-saving treatments.

**Data Source:** NYS Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2005 & 2009

**Contact:**

For more information about the data included and their specific implications for action, please send an email to DCDIPIFA@health.state.ny.us with the IFA # 2011-12 in the subject line.

**References:**
