

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 14, 2020

Dr. Robert Redfield, M.D.  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Redfield:

We write to request that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) evaluate a possible trend of increased stroke risk among younger and middle-aged Americans who are, or previously were, infected with coronavirus (COVID-19). We also urge the CDC to quickly alert the public and medical professionals about the possible correlation between COVID-19 and strokes.

Recent news reports have documented an increased prevalence of stroke among younger and middle-aged COVID-19 patients in hospitals and communities across the country.<sup>[1]</sup> These reports have indicated that – potentially due to blood clots caused by the virus – many COVID-19 patients under the age of 50 are suffering from the deadliest type of stroke that impacts movement, speech, and decision-making.<sup>[2]</sup> With over one million confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States as of May 13, even a relatively low prevalence of stroke in this particular patient population could lead to a significant increase in the number of stroke patients in our country.

We believe it is critical that the CDC evaluate the prevalence of stroke in COVID-19 patients, including the potential link to stroke from the development of blood clots caused by the virus. An increased incidence of stroke amongst younger COVID-19 patients is particularly concerning because typically about two-thirds of people typically hospitalized for stroke are over the age of 65, but most of these recent strokes amongst patients with COVID-19 are not traditionally high-risk populations.<sup>[3]</sup> In addition, it is concerning that many Americans may also not know they have COVID-19 or previously had the virus, but they could now be at increased risk for stroke.<sup>[4]</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cha, Ariana Eunjung. (April 25, 2020). *Young and middle-aged people, barely sick with covid-19, are dying of strokes*. The Washington Post. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/04/24/strokes-coronavirus-young-patients/> and Fox, Maggie. (April 23, 2020). *Covid-19 causes sudden strokes in young adults, doctors say*. CNN. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/22/health/strokes-coronavirus-young-adults/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Cha, Ariana Eunjung. (April 25, 2020). *Young and middle-aged people, barely sick with covid-19, are dying of strokes*. The Washington Post.

<sup>3</sup> Stroke Facts (Accessed on May 12, 2020). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/facts.htm>.

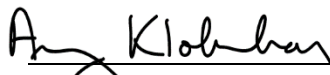
<sup>4</sup> Plater, Roz. (April 24, 2020). *As Many as 50 Percent of People with COVID-19 Aren't Aware They Have the Virus*. Healthline. Retrieved from <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/50-percent-of-people-with-covid19-not-aware-have-virus>.

We request that the CDC quickly work to make sure Americans are informed about the possible link between COVID-19 and strokes. We also respectfully ask that you respond to the following questions to clarify how CDC is approaching this potential public health threat.

1. Does the CDC have any preliminary data on the correlation between stroke and COVID-19? Is the CDC working to obtain additional data?
2. Will the CDC update its stroke patient education handouts, stroke communications kit, and stroke education materials for health professionals to incorporate information related to COVID-19, even if the patient does not have the typical conditions, lifestyle factors, or medical history and other characteristics considered high-risk for stroke?
3. What steps can the CDC take to educate more Americans about the possible connection to COVID-19 and the increased risk of a stroke, especially among younger- and middle-aged populations?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to working with you to keep Americans informed of the potential stroke risk related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

  
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

  
Marco Rubio  
United States Senator