



Vitruvian Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MEDIA

INFORMATION

Daryl Cole: 706-272-6168

Hamilton Medical Center reminding community members to B.E. F.A.S.T. with stroke awareness

DALTON, Ga. (May 5, 2026) – Hamilton Medical Center (HMC) is encouraging community members to be aware about the dangers of stroke and steps to take to avoid stroke. May is National Stroke Awareness Month.

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or ruptures. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood (and oxygen) it needs, causing brain cells to die.

“It’s very important to be treated quickly to minimize the effects of a stroke,” said Meagan Darnell, HMC neurosciences manager. “Knowing the signs of stroke could save your life or the life of a family member or friend.”

The B.E. F.A.S.T. acronym is a valuable tool to help identify a possible stroke. The letters stand for balance, eyes, face, arms, speech and time – all factors in identifying and getting treated for stroke.

“When experiencing the symptoms of stroke, every second counts, and so does getting the right level of care as quickly as possible,” said Darnell.

HMC has a nationally ranked, highly trained Rapid Stroke Team on staff. HMC has received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Get With The Guidelines Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award. The award recognizes the hospital’s commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines based on the latest scientific evidence.

To avoid stroke, it is recommended to stay active, eat healthy, quit smoking, control cholesterol and watch your blood pressure.

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Photo: Hamilton Medical Center Stroke Team members are pictured.

Sidebar:

B.E. F.A.S.T.

Balance – Is there a sudden loss of balance or coordination?

Eyes – Is there sudden blurred or double vision or sudden, persistent vision trouble?

Face – Ask the person to smile. Is one or both sides of the face drooping?

Arms – Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one side drift downward? Is there weakness or numbness on one side?

Speech – Does the person have slurred or garbled speech? Can he/she repeat simple phrases?

Time – Call 911 for immediate medical attention if you notice one or more of these signs. Also, take note of when symptoms began.

About Hamilton Medical Center

The flagship affiliate for Vitruvian Health’s Northwest Georgia region, Hamilton Medical Center (HMC) is a 255-bed regional acute-care hospital that offers major medical, surgical and diagnostic services, including accredited stroke and chest pain centers. Advanced technology and wellness are two significant areas of focus for HMC. Services include the freestanding Hamilton Ambulatory Surgery Center, Hamilton Diagnostics Center, and Bradley Wellness Center, as well as a Level II trauma center, Peoples Cancer Institute, Heart & Vascular program (including open heart surgery), Hamilton Spine Health and Sport, Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, and more.

About Vitruvian Health

Vitruvian Health, formerly Hamilton Health Care System, is a not-for-profit, fully integrated health system serving the Northwest Georgia and Southeast Tennessee regions. Vitruvian includes Hamilton Medical Center in Dalton, Ga., and Bradley Medical Center in Cleveland, Tenn., affiliated physician practices, walk-in care centers, retirement and skilled nursing centers, a diagnostic center, a cancer institute, an institute for children with developmental delays, and more. Known for its advanced care and personalized service, Vitruvian Health offers innovative treatment options in state-of-the-art facilities while maintaining a compassionate, friendly and tranquil healing environment.

The Vitruvian name draws from the organization’s recognizable da Vinci-inspired Vitruvian Man icon, which has been a prominent part of Hamilton’s logo since 1976. Da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man represents harmony, balance, and the interconnectedness of all aspects of health, perfectly aligning with Hamilton’s integrated system of care.