

# Froedtert Health and High School Students Partner to Promote Stroke Awareness: Froedtert and the LAUNCH Medicine and Healthcare Strand Program

Community education on stroke prevention, recognizing the signs and symptoms of a stroke, and calling 911 are essential elements for stroke programs to promote. Hospitals and health systems engage communities by collaborating with local organizations, hosting workshops and seminars, implementing community outreach programs, having a social media presence, and conducting many other activities and partnerships. In the fall of 2022, Froedtert Health partnered with local students to launch a stroke awareness campaign. The campaign includes a stop animation video titled [Stroke Prevention with Craig](#), which highlights the signs and symptoms of a stroke and the importance of calling 911.

Froedtert Health and LAUNCH Medicine and Healthcare Strand (LAUNCH) have been connected for several years. LAUNCH is a professional-based program offered to high school students within the Elmbrook and Wauwatosa school districts. During their time in the program, students are matched with mentors for project-based experiences in their desired career field. In the spring of 2022, Amanda Reedy, a Froedtert Health community engagement coordinator, approached Shawna Boehlen, the stroke coordinator at Froedtert Menomonee Falls Hospital and Froedtert West Bend Hospital, and Angie Cofta, a stroke nurse navigator at Froedtert Hospital, about mentoring students in the LAUNCH program. This interaction led to their role in providing guidance during the fall 2022 LAUNCH session.

Boehlen and Cofta mentored three high school students, Garrett Stewart, Mack Schulz, and Ramsey Raddemann. They met virtually for nine weeks for an hour a week. The students were tasked with creating a resource on the importance of calling 911 for stroke. They had to research stroke with a variety of resources that were provided to them, including the Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program and American Heart Association's websites. Two Medical College of Wisconsin neurology residents, Michael Dryden, MD, and William Pennant, MD, along with Kenny Asselin, a captain at West Bend Fire Department, presented on stroke to the LAUNCH students and engaged in conversations with the students about their perspectives on why people in the community may not know when or why to call 911. After the presentations and their research, the students were surprised to learn that teenagers and young adults could be at risk of having strokes. With this information, the students proposed that they switch gears from creating a radio advertisement to something that their priority population of adolescents and young adults would be more likely to engage with. This led them to create the stop animation video, [Stroke Prevention with Craig](#), which emphasized the importance of people of all ages recognizing the signs and symptom of stroke, along with the importance of calling 911. The students were able to present their work to fellow classmates and Froedtert Health staff. The stop animation was shared on the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin health network website and social media platforms, and with the Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program. By sharing this on social media, and with the QR code on the right of the page, countless individuals and potential stroke patients are reached.

## The Players

**Shawna Boehlen**, Froedtert Menomonee Falls and Froedtert West Bend Stroke Coordinator

**Angie Cofta**, Froedtert Hospital Stroke Nurse Navigator

**Mack Schulz**, Brookfield High School Student

**Garrett Stewart**, Brookfield High School Student

**Ramsey Raddemann**, Brookfield High School Student

**Amanda Reedy**, Froedtert Menomonee Falls Community Engagement Coordinator

**Michael Dryden, MD**, Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin Neurology Resident

**William Pennant, MD**, Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin Neurology Resident

**Kenny Asselin**, West Bend Fire Department Captain, Captain of Fire Prevention

**LAUNCH Medicine and Healthcare Strand**

## What They Did

Unique collaboration between Froedtert Health and the LAUNCH Program led to the creation of a stroke awareness campaign titled [Stroke Prevention with Craig](#).

## Stroke Prevention with Craig QR Code



Community engagement is necessary for innovative stroke prevention, awareness, and treatment. It allows health care organizations to recognize gaps and find opportunities for growth and connection. After partnering with LAUNCH to promote the importance of calling 911, Boehlen and Cofta recognized there was a need to understand why patients did not call 911. This became more evident after conversations at the June 2023 Coverdell Learning Collaborative meeting about the need to investigate community reasons for lower Emergency Medical Service (EMS) utilization for stroke. In 2022, only 41.3% of stroke patients arrived by ambulance to Wisconsin Coverdell Partner Hospitals<sup>1</sup>. This is concerning because EMS are often the first medical point of contact prior to the hospital. Arrival via EMS increases the likelihood of getting to a hospital with the necessary stroke certification and receiving timely treatment. Timely treatment is imperative because a patient loses nearly two million brain cells every minute a stroke goes untreated, which can lead to long-term disability or death<sup>2</sup>. To address these concerns, Froedtert Health now asks patients if they called 911 during post-discharge phone calls. If they did not, patients are asked why they did not call 911 at the time of their stroke. This information will help the organization address the gap through tailored community education.

## Lessons Learned

Developing a partnership between a health system and high school-based program is different than most community education efforts. Boehlen and Cofta had to consider permissions for the minors, learning styles, willingness to gather new information, the limited time the group could meet, and that the students needed approval to leave school when presenting their work to Froedtert Health staff. Teamwork, passion, creativity, and a willingness to learn made this partnership successful. Boehlen and Cofta enjoyed mentoring the students and felt like they had good communication. The students were eager to learn and educate their peers and greater community on stroke. Boehlen and Cofta highly recommend partnering with a school-based program because it is humbling and rewarding to learn from each other while creating powerful messages for the community.

## Continued Commitment

Froedtert Health continues to engage the community through various education efforts and services. In the fall of 2023, Shawna Boehlen and Angie Cofta will partner with LAUNCH Medicine and Healthcare Strand to mentor a new group of students and provide innovative stroke materials to the community. LAUNCH continues in its mission to represent the collaboration of education, business, and community, providing students with a unique, immersive experience, resulting in highly skilled, adaptable, global innovators and leaders.

## Next Steps

As a result of this partnership with LAUNCH, Froedtert Health has begun to address the gap in community education as it relates to EMS utilization. Asking why patients may or may not call 911 when they have a stroke is the first step in creating necessary resources to further educate the public. It is important to remember the signs and symptoms of a stroke, BE FAST (Balance, Eyes, Face, Arm, Speech, and Terrible headache), and to call 911 immediately because time lost is brain lost. Froedtert hospitals will utilize information from post-discharge calls to target social media postings and future community education efforts.

## Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program

The Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program works with hospitals, emergency medical services, and professional and community organizations across the state to support a healthier Wisconsin by improving community awareness and quality of stroke care. Wisconsin Community based organizations, EMS agencies, and hospitals of all types and sizes are invited to be part of the Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program. For more information, please visit the [Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program's website](#).

1. American Heart Association Get with the Guidelines® (GWTG).

2. American Heart Association. (2023). *Stroke symptoms and warning signs*. [www.stroke.org](https://www.stroke.org/en/about-stroke/stroke-symptoms#:~:text=Stroke%20is%20the%20No.%205,Call%20911%20immediately). <https://www.stroke.org/en/about-stroke/stroke-symptoms#:~:text=Stroke%20is%20the%20No.%205,Call%20911%20immediately>.

