



FEATURED

FELICIA DAVIS
**Helping
Leaders &
Survivors
Realize Their
Potential**
page 4



Making the invisible visible since 1983

Dear *Noggin* Readers,

We are honored to bring you this special stroke edition of *The Noggin*. With each issue, the stories you share through us help bond a diverse, dynamic community that educates, informs and inspires.

As a statewide nonprofit, our work touches nearly every aspect of Arizona life: The parent navigating a confusing new world after their child's brain injury. The military family seeking education to support their loved one with PTSD. The innocent bystander impacted by a drunk or distracted driver. They all look to us for guidance and we as a community are there to ease their burden.

Now, the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona is turning 40 years old. With the ever-expanding incidence of brain injury throughout Arizona, we need to maintain our level of support and increase our capacity. Our team is on the frontlines every day with the Helpline, Care Coordination and support groups. This summer, we're launching innovative programs for survivors experiencing homelessness and male caregivers.

As we look ahead to the next 40 years, we can't do all of this with your backing today. I urge you to keep the movement strong by making a recurring \$40 monthly donation for an entire year at biaaz.org/donation or scan this QR Code.



Your continued support means the world to the brain injury community. We can't thank you enough for all you do.

Sincerely,



Carrie Collins, CEO
Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona

OUR MISSION—To improve the quality of life for everyone impacted by brain injury by providing advocacy, education, information, support, and resources, while promoting brain injury prevention

OUR VISION—A world where all individuals impacted by brain injury thrive in their community

Contents

THROUGH THE EYES OF A SURVIVOR

Felicia Davis

Felicia Helps Leaders and Survivors Realize Their Potential

Page 4

BRAIN HEALTH INSIDER

**Encompass Health Teams Up To Enhance
“Life After Stroke”**

Page 6

NEURO NEWS

Famous People Who Experienced A Stroke

Page 11

Support Groups

Brain Cave & She Shed

Page 12



Did You Know?

For every minute that a stroke goes untreated, the brain loses 1.9 million neurons. Time is brain.

Felicia Helps Leaders and Survivors Realize Their Potential



When Felicia Davis was named as a keynote speaker at the 2023 Rays of Hope Conference for Survivors of Brain Injury, nobody was surprised by the honor, especially Felicia. As Founder & CEO of Black Women's Collective, she has helped thousands realize their full potential. As a stroke survivor, she understands how that's particularly important to the brain injury community.

Felicia was born in East St. Louis, Illinois and grew up an introvert and deep thinker. "I've always really valued the way that the women in my family noticed that about me and were able to mentor, nourish and encourage me, based upon my natural way of being."

She studied Art at Illinois State University, then moved to San Diego and got her degree at the University of Phoenix.

First and foremost, Felicia is a mother to three adults and has been married for 30 years. A former HR executive, she left her

last corporate job after 20 years of corporate life that defined her career. Her ability to lead was nurtured by one of her favorite bosses, Emmett Summers. "He showed me the way and was very intentional and helped me step up inside of my leadership. I value that relationship to this day."

She adds that his style of mentoring defines her own style. "He was very people-oriented, and truly cared about his team. He was also meticulous in terms of treating us based on what he saw us needing in terms of our own goals and vision for

our career, then merging that with what was needed for the organization.”

Felicia’s life changed when she had her second stress-induced stroke.

“I was at work and had just gotten off a phone call,” she recalls. “I went to pick up a pen to try to write some notes and it kept falling out of my hand; I just thought it was kind of strange. So I went to the restroom, but was unable to undo my pants. I got nervous and I went back to my office, then to my car to calm myself down.

As she was leaving, her boss accidentally bumped into her. Everything fell out of her hand and she got very discombobulated. “When I got to my car, I started crying because I didn’t understand what was going on. I didn’t feel pain, but I couldn’t pick up that pen. In that moment, I realized I had to get to the hospital, which was about 30 minutes away.”

Felicia called her husband and told him she didn’t understand what was happening. After arriving at the hospital, they air-lifted her to another facility with the staff to support her.

Her doctor said that this was her second stress-induced stroke, then explained how certain areas of the brain could become impacted. For instance, a loss of oxygen to the brain can damage the tissue, leading to a brain injury. “I knew it was work-related. I was on that executive track, just doing what I thought was necessary to maintain my status, while sacrificing a lot, including help for me.”

Felicia’s recovery has been steady, but much of it is invisible. “One of my biggest challenges is that I have severe neuropathy because everything on the right side of my

body was impacted by my stroke. Unfortunately, no medication has helped me so far.

“It was hard work to learn how to navigate the world as the new me. Now that I’m through it with a whole new perspective, I wouldn’t change it for the world.”

Today, she trains leaders to become bold and provocative by investing in her own mentorship. “It’s impossible for me as a leader and coach to ask someone to do something that I’m not doing myself.” This highly sought-after motivator uses personal insight, education, stories, and actionable takeaways to help corporate and entrepreneurial leaders become more successful.

Her advice is built on four pillars: self-care, sustainability, sovereignty, and self-expression. She encourages clients to make themselves their number one priority. This includes setting boundaries as well as asking for and getting paid for what one’s worth.

She has a similar message for fellow brain injury survivors, encouraging them to overcome insecurity and stimulate their thinking to become inspired. “Define what success means to you in a very personal way. Once you make that declaration, then live it fully. I also say focus on the vision not the circumstances. If I dwell on my circumstances, I will never ever be able to show up and be the Felicia I am today.



Did You Know?

Stroke can happen to anyone at any age.

Encompass Health Teams Up To Enhance “Life After Stroke”

One of the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona’s most trusted community partners is Encompass Health Valley of the The Sun Rehabilitation Hospital. For years, the two organizations have worked together to help survivors of brain injury receive much-needed guidance and inpatient rehabilitation services. This is especially true when it comes to stroke.

Encompass Health’s unique stroke program is designed to help patients recover from the physical, cognitive, and emotional effects of a stroke, with the goal of achieving the highest level of independence possible.

Employing a multidisciplinary approach, a team of healthcare professionals works together to provide the best possible care for each patient. This includes physicians, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and social workers.

They begin with a comprehensive evaluation of the patient’s medical history, current condition, and individual needs. This assessment helps the team develop a personalized treatment plan to address the patient’s specific goals and challenges. This plan may include physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy.

In addition to therapy, Encompass Health’s stroke program includes education and

support for patients and their families. This may include education on stroke prevention and self-care strategies, as well as emotional and psychological support to cope with the unique challenges of one’s recovery.

They also focus on easing the patient’s transition back to their home and community. This may include providing home health services, outpatient therapy, and community resources to help patients continue their recovery and maintain their independence.

“Their approach truly is at the forefront of the field,” says Will Grove, Outreach Coordinator for the Brain Injury Alliance. “We’re proud to strengthen their efforts with support groups designed to guide survivors through



Did You Know?

Stroke is the second leading cause of death worldwide.

In addition to therapy, Encompass Health's stroke program includes education and support for patients and their families.



a whole host of issues, from advocacy to networking. Just about everything involved with post-hospital recovery.”

Encompass Health also participates in clinical research to help to identify new and innovative treatments for stroke patients and helps to improve the overall quality of care for survivors.

One exciting area is the use of robotics in stroke rehabilitation, exploring the use of robotic devices to help patients recover movement and function in their affected limbs. These devices can provide precise, repetitive movements that are difficult to achieve with traditional therapy methods.

Their scope of research also incorporates neuroplasticity, which is the brain's ability to adapt and reorganize after injury. Researchers are exploring ways to enhance neuroplasticity through various interventions, such as cognitive training and non-invasive brain stimulation.

Much of this innovation can be seen in their therapy gyms, which are loaded with advanced technologies to help with a variety of areas, including:

- ▶ Ambulation
- ▶ Balance and fall prevention
- ▶ Blood circulation
- ▶ Driving
- ▶ Hand-eye coordination
- ▶ Independence in everyday living
- ▶ Memory and cognition
- ▶ Memory and condition
- ▶ Mobility
- ▶ Sensory training
- ▶ Speech and language delays
- ▶ Swallowing
- ▶ Walking

What's more, Encompass Health participates in studies related to telemedicine, or the use of technology to deliver healthcare services remotely, particularly in rural or underserved areas where access to specialized care may be limited. They are also exploring the use of new medications and treatments to prevent and treat complications of stroke, such as blood clots and seizures.

Indeed, the teams at Encompass are committed to enhancing “Life After Stroke.”



Every month, celebrities grab headlines when they have strokes, including Aaron Sorokin, Hailey Bieber and Sinbad. This leads to a brighter spotlight on the field and greater awareness of the numerous advances. With new research and technology emerging, there is hope for better prevention, treatment, and outcomes for those who suffer from stroke. Here is some of that progress making news:



SINGING IN GROUPS CAN ENHANCE REHABILITATION

Researchers at the University of Helsinki have found that language function and psychosocial well-being of patients and their families can be promoted by singing with a group.

Two-fifths of stroke victims suffer from aphasia, a difficulty or inability to speak or produce written language. However, they can be helped with their voices.

This group intervention provides opportunities for peer support while simultaneously being cost-effective. In the study, sessions were led by a trained music therapist and choir conductor.



SMARTPHONE HELPS GET STROKE DIAGNOSIS IN MINUTES

The stroke unit at Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Medical Center is the first in the country to clinically test a smartphone device using artificial intelligence to perform a neurological examination based on the patient's voice. It then employs a video recording of the face and other parts of the body, pro-

cesses this input, and presents diagnoses of stroke cases in minutes.

CVAid Medic was invented by the CVAid company at Ramat Hahayal in Tel Aviv. Until now, the company has been working on development with stroke experts in the US, Spain and Germany. It expects that the technology will become available to paramedics in ambulances and medical teams in hospital ERs and stroke units in less than two years.

This technology aims to provide triage clinicians with a tool for immediate diagnosis, with an accuracy rate of about 90%.



BLOOD TYPE MAY DETERMINE RISK OF STROKE

Researchers from the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) suggest that our blood type may be the key to predicting a stroke.

Their findings show that those with an early stroke were more likely to have type A blood and less likely to have type O blood, the most common type. Those with a stroke later in life, or people who never had a stroke, didn't show these results.

They also found that early and late stroke sufferers were more likely to have type B blood compared to the control group. Those with type A had a 16% higher risk of early stroke, while those with type O had a 12% lower risk. Scientists currently don't understand the connection, but assume it's related to platelets.



SLEEP PROBLEMS MAY INDICATE INCREASED RISK OF STROKE

People who have sleep problems may be more likely to have a stroke, according to a study published in *Neurology*.

Sleep problems included getting too much or too little sleep, taking long naps, having poor quality sleep, snoring, snorting and sleep apnea. Individuals with five or more of these symptoms had an even greater risk of stroke. The study does not show that sleeping problems cause stroke. It only shows an association.

“Not only do our results suggest that individual sleep problems may increase a person's risk of stroke but having more than five of these symptoms may lead to five times the risk of stroke compared to those who do not have any sleep problems,” said study

author Christine McCarthy, MB, BCh, BAO, of the University of Galway in Ireland. “Our results suggest that sleep problems should be an area of focus for stroke prevention.”



NEW EARPIECE EASES RELEARNING OF PHYSICAL ACTIONS

Until now, rehabilitating regions of the brain damaged by a stroke has required patients to undergo an expensive operation to implant a stimulation device below the skin. Since it's common practice to wait a full year after a stroke to carry out this procedure, patients have been losing valuable time.

Now, researchers from the Rehabilitation Engineering Laboratory have developed a new system that makes vagus nerve stimulation much easier and available much faster. “Our earpiece emits subtle electrical impulses to activate the nerve in the outer ear, thus eliminating the need for a surgical procedure,” explains Paulius Viskaitis, who was recently awarded an ETH Zurich Pioneer Fellowship to help him bring the technology to market. What's more, stroke patients can use this technology without professional supervision.



Did You Know?

Stroke is largely preventable through lifestyle changes, including healthy diet, regular exercise, and reducing smoking and alcohol consumption.

SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP

We're the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona
and we have several openings on our
Young Professionals Advisory Council.

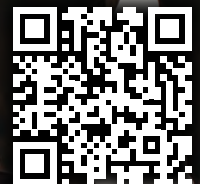


**Brain Injury
Alliance**
ARIZONA

BIAAZ.ORG

INFO@BIAAZ.ORG

888-500-9165



If you are an Arizonan under 40 with a strong desire to learn about brain health in its many facets, including injuries, addiction, depression, and PTSD, we want to hear from you.

As a member of our Young Professionals Advisory Council, you will work alongside elected officials, first responders, medical professionals, and researchers. Start expanding your network by filling out our brief survey (scan QR Code).

Famous People Who Experienced a Stroke

Anybody can get a stroke at any time. In recent months, Jamie Foxx, Aaron Sorkin, and Hailey Bieber have made headlines revealing they had one. It's all part of a growing awareness of the causes of stroke and the challenges of a successful recovery. Here are several famous individuals who made news with their stories:



SHARON STONE: The actress and producer suffered a stroke in 2001 at the age of 43, which resulted in a brain hemorrhage. She later underwent surgery to repair the damage and is now an advocate for stroke awareness and research.



KIRK DOUGLAS: The legendary actor suffered a stroke when he was 80, which left him with some speech difficulties. He continued to act until his death at the age of 103.



ANGELINA JOLIE: At the age of 35, she had a minor stroke and underwent surgery to remove a key vein that had formed an abnormal connection with another vein.



RANDY TRAVIS: The country music singer suffered a stroke at the age of 54, which left him with difficulty speaking and walking. He has since undergone rehabilitation and continues to perform and record music.



ARETHA FRANKLIN: When she was 68, a stroke affected her speech, requiring her to be hospitalized for a few days.



BRET MICHAELS: The musician and reality television star suffered a stroke at the age of 47, which he attributed to a brain hemorrhage he had suffered earlier that year. He continues to perform and tour.



SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR: The Supreme Court Justice's stroke in 2007 caused short-term memory loss. She recovered and returned to work a few months later.



SUPPORT GROUPS

Brain Cave & She Shed

Support groups can play a crucial role in the recovery process for individuals who have experienced a brain injury, including a stroke. At the Brain Injury Alliance, two such groups are Brain Cave (for adult men 18+) and She Shed (for adult women 18+).

These virtual conversation-based groups are open to survivors of all types of brain injury statewide via Zoom.

Here are some five ways both groups can be a real godsend:

1. **Connection:** Brain injury can be a isolating experience, leaving people feeling disconnected from their communities and loved ones. Connecting with others who have gone through similar experiences often combat loneliness.
2. **Understanding:** Members of a support group can offer a unique level of understanding and empathy, having gone through similar experiences. This can be especially important for brain injury survivors, who may feel misunderstood or discounted by others who don't fully understand the impact of this invisible disability.
3. **Encouragement:** Recovery from brain injury can be a long and difficult process, with many setbacks and challenges along the way. Both Brain Cave and She Shed can provide encouragement and motivation, helping members to stay focused on their goals and maintain a positive outlook.
4. **Information:** These groups can also be a valuable source of information, with members sharing tips and resources for managing symptoms, accessing treatment, and navigating the health-care system.
5. **Coping skills:** Coping with new challenges can be overwhelming, and members can help with practical coping skills and strategies for managing stress, anxiety, and other emotional and psychological issues.

If you or a loved one is looking for support, please contact our group facilitators directly:

BRAIN CAVE

Meets the first Wednesday of each month, 6:00–7:30pm.

No charge, but you must register.

CONTACT

Will Grove

Resource Facilitation Specialist & Certified Brain Injury Specialist

outreach@biaaz.org
(888) 500-9165

SHE SHED

Meets the first Thursday of each month, 6:00–7:30pm

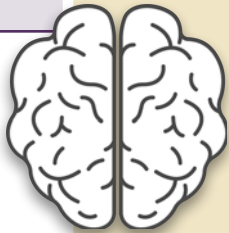
No charge, but you must register.

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Did You Know?

Women are more likely to have a stroke than men.

SALUTE OUR VETS



RUN FOR BRAIN HEALTH 10K & 5K RACE / 1-MILE FUN RUN

SAVE the DATE

Saturday, October 14, 2023

Join the movement to help veterans get back on track!

INFORMATION REGISTRATION • SPONSORSHIPS

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For more information, email info@biaaz.org or call 888-500-9165

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Making the invisible visible since 1983

40 for 40

Help us celebrate 40 years of service with a recurring monthly donation of \$40 for an entire year.

Your support provides hope and guidance for survivors of brain injury and their families with free programs and services.



Simply scan the QR Code, mail in your donation, or visit us online at biaaz.org/donation.

You can also contact us at info@biaaz.org
or (888) 500-9165



*Thank you from
the bottom of our hearts.*