

# Sam Sherratt Public School

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- Superchoice Country Market
- The Canadian Champion

## Live wisely and live longer, says heart-stroke foundation

By KAREN SMITH

*The Champion.*

The Heart and Stroke Foundation is fighting back against an increased number of strokes in the province by declaring June Stroke Awareness Month.

"Deaths are just the tip of the iceberg," said Dr. Antoine Hakim, renowned stroke specialist and researcher for the organization. "Less than a quarter of strokes that occur each year result in death. The majority of stroke victims survive, but many are left with permanent disabilities."

Through Stroke Awareness Month, the organization is trying to prevent strokes by educating the public about the devastating effects as well as help sufferers find the care they need, said Avril Goffredo, the foundation's Halton region coordinator.

"The main purpose is to raise awareness of strokes in communities and the aftermath," she said. "Heart disease and stroke are very different because strokes affect the brain."

Many people are left in turmoil trying to find appropriate care — especially in the current financially-strapped medical system — for family members who are left disabled after an attack.

"Taking care of these people and ensuring they don't have another stroke is a growing concern for our health care system," Dr. Hakim said. "Stroke costs the Canadian economy \$2.5 billion a year."

Traditionally, the foundation has held Heart and Stroke Month in February as its annual public awareness and fundraising campaign. That will not change with the introduction of Stroke Awareness Month, Ms Goffredo said.

This month, the public is invited to attend the annual general meeting of the foundation's Halton chapter at the Burlington Art Centre (Lakeshore Road at Maple Avenue) tonight (Wednesday) at 7:30 p.m. A speech therapist will discuss

The main warning signs of stroke include the following:

- Sudden weakness, numbness and/or tingling of the face, arm and/or leg
- Temporary difficulty or loss of speech or trouble understanding speech
- Sudden loss of vision, particularly in one eye, or double vision
- Sudden severe, unusual headaches
- Dizziness, unsteadiness or sudden falls, especially with any of the above signs.

Other symptoms may include seizures, sudden nausea, fever, vomiting and brief loss of consciousness.

how stroke affects speech. Stroke survivors and their families can also get help from the foundation by calling the toll-free Heart and Stroke Healthline (1-800-360-1557), which provides a number of educational materials on the issue.

Available to victims is the foundation's latest book, "The Canadian Family Guide to Stroke," and the foundation's "Stroke Provincial Community Resource Guide."

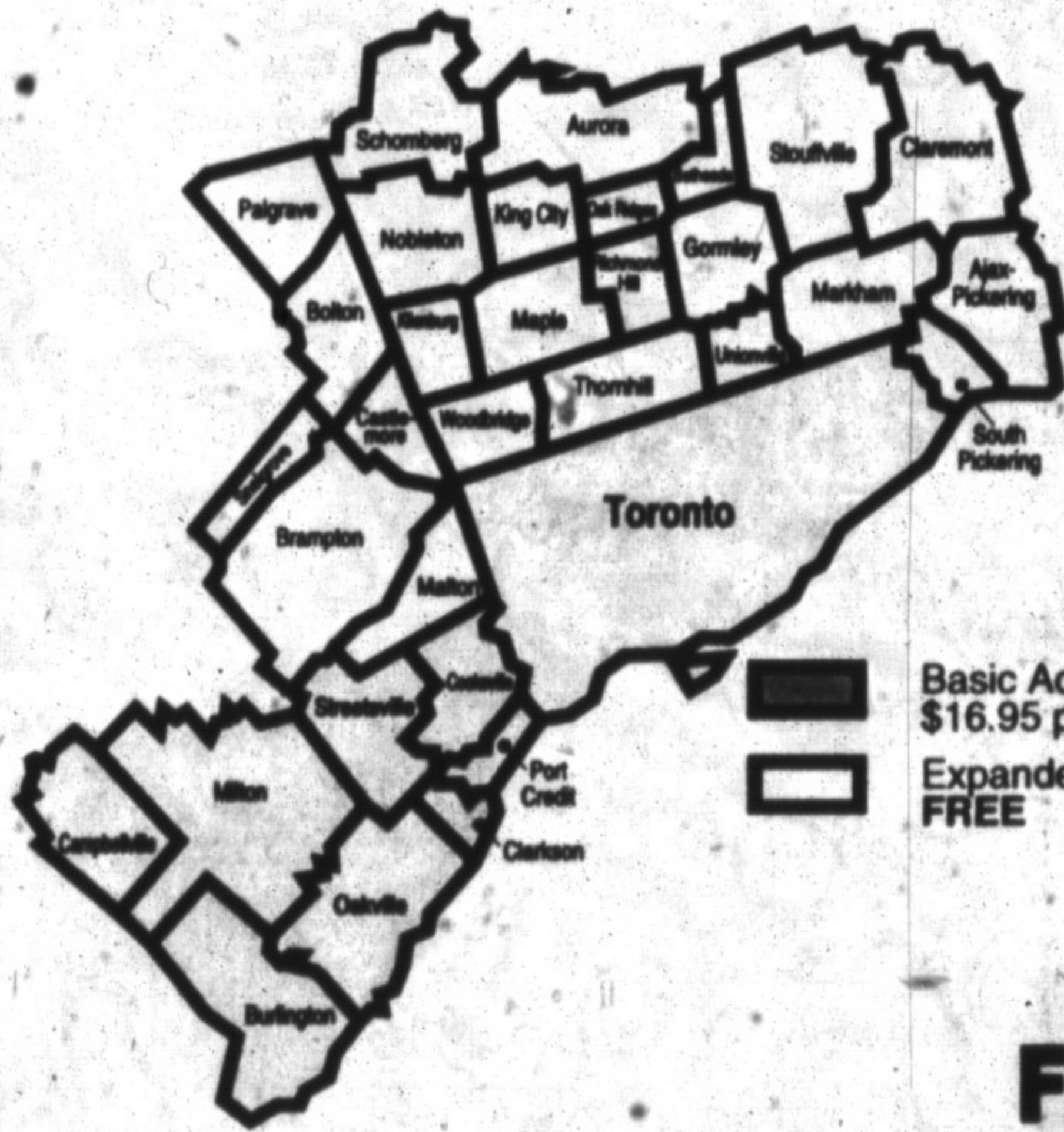
Since 1990, the number of deaths due to the ailment in central Ontario, excluding Toronto, have increased 9 per cent, the foundation announced June 1.

The jump in deaths is in keeping with a national trend, according to the foundation. Since 1990, stroke deaths across Canada have increased 12 per cent in women and 7 per cent in men.

Risk factors for ischemic stroke (brain attack) include smoking, lack of physical activity, a high-fat diet and high blood pressure. The foundation's Report Card on Canadian Baby Boomers, released in January, showed even relatively young Canadians are not effectively controlling the risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

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