

MEDIA ADVISORY

To: Editors & Health Journalists
Issued by: Department of Health
Date: Wednesday, 05 August 2026

South Africa hosts World Stroke Summit - Africa 2026

Pretoria: The Department of Health will this week (6-7 August) host the World Stroke Summit Africa in collaboration with the World Stroke Organization (WSO), as part of ongoing efforts to elevate stroke as a pressing health and development priority across the continent, requiring coordinated national and regional action.

A stroke is a medical emergency that occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted, either due to a blockage or bleeding. This condition remains amongst the leading causes of death and adult disability globally, yet it is largely preventable and treatable. According to the World Health Organization, there were over 11 million new cases of stroke globally in 2021, making this condition the third leading cause of death and disability.

South Africa's hosting of the Summit underscores the country's commitment to leading continental efforts in combating non-communicable diseases. This high-level gathering brings together health policy makers, clinicians, researchers, regional and international stroke experts, industry partners, and civil society organisations from across the African continent to accelerate action on stroke prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

This Summit takes place few months after first-ever World Health Organization's Resolution on Stroke adopted in May this year, recognising stroke as a global health priority, and a major driver of death and disability worldwide. This was in response to the increasing global burden of stroke, which is projected to rise by 50% by the year 2050.

The delegates representing countries across the continent, will use this strategic platform to share practical policy approaches and country experiences that can strengthen prevention, improve access to care, and support effective implementation within African health systems. Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi will deliver a keynote address on behalf on the government of South Africa.

The risk of stroke can be significantly reduced through lifestyle changes and effective management of high blood pressure, reducing tobacco use and limiting exposure to second-hand smoke, engaging in regular physical activity, limiting use of alcohol, and effective management of comorbid conditions such as diabetes.

Some of the symptoms of stroke include sudden dizziness, sudden vision loss, facial droop, weakness in one or both arms and strange speech. It is recommended that a suspected stroke should be treated as a health emergency to mitigate a wide range of complications, including serious effects on the brain, heart and other parts of the body.

Members of the media are invited to attend the summit scheduled as follows:

Date: Thursday, 06 – Friday, 7 August 2026
Time: 09h00
Venue: NH Johannesburg Sandton Hotel, 138 Rivonia Road

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