

12 Forest St.
Whitinsville, MA 01588
Email: perkfam7@verizon.net

April 1, 2008

Honorable Governor Deval Patrick
Office of the Governor
State House
Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Honorable Governor Patrick,

I am the parent of a childhood stroke survivor. My child, Elijah, had a stroke in utero. I used to think that stroke only occurred in adults. Now I know stroke can occur before birth, in infancy and in childhood. Stroke is seen in 1 in 4000 newborns, with over half these children having serious life-long neurological disabilities. We would like to increase awareness of childhood stroke in Massachusetts by asking you to issue a proclamation declaring May 5, 2008 as Childhood Stroke Awareness Day.

Established seven years ago and supported by the Children's Hemiplegia and Stroke Association (CHASA), a nonprofit organization helping families affected by childhood stroke, this day is designed to increase awareness of childhood stroke among the public, media, government, and medical communities. The Alexandra Beale Foundation has also joined in childhood stroke awareness efforts throughout the years.

The awareness day's message to our state is clear: Stroke does occur in infants, children and even unborn babies just like my son. It is an important issue that is largely unrecognized. Stroke in the newborn period may be as common as it is in older people. When a baby has a stroke, it has life-long implications. Despite this, there is little research and funding for the development of treatment studies in children. There is a definite need for medical research into the cause, treatment, and prevention of stroke in infants and children.

I have enclosed a sample proclamation and a fact sheet containing more information about infant and childhood stroke. Thank you in advance for your consideration and approval of our request. The events on Childhood Stroke Awareness Day, supported by your proclamation, will go far in recognizing and bettering the lives of families who are touched by infant and childhood stroke.

Sincerely,

Dawn Perkins