

What is Aphasia?

- Aphasia (*uh-fay-zhuh*) is an acquired language disorder that results from damage to parts of the brain. Stroke is the leading cause of aphasia. However, this disorder can also result from brain tumors, head injuries, brain infections, and other conditions of the brain.
- People with aphasia know what they want to say but cannot always get out the words. Aphasia can affect talking, understanding, reading and writing. Memory and thinking can sometimes also be reduced.
- An estimated one million Americans of all ages suffer from aphasia, the majority of which result from a stroke. Approximately one-third of the victims of a severe head trauma have aphasia.
- There is no cure for aphasia. However, intensive speech therapy has been found to be very effective. Most experts believe that the most effective treatment begins early in the recovery process. Some of the factors that influence the amount of improvement include the cause of the damage, the area of the brain that was damaged, the extent of the injury, and the age and health of the individual.
- Aphasia therapy strives to improve an individual's ability to communicate by helping the person to utilize their remaining capabilities, to restore lost language abilities as much as possible, to compensate for language deficits, and to learn other methods of communicating.
- Family involvement is often a crucial component of aphasia treatment. Family members can learn the best ways to communicate with their loved ones.
- Current aphasia research is exploring new ways to evaluate and treat aphasia as well as ways to further understand the function of the brain.

* * * * *

Media Contact: **Maribeth Farkas** or **Walter Kraft** at Caponigro Public Relations Inc.
(248) 355-3200.