



Christina's letter

Dear Ms Plibersek

My name is Christina and I am one of your constituents. I am a carer to a stroke survivor.

Alex was 46 when he was felled by a stroke. Felled is the right word, Alex was fit and healthy. He did have hypertension, a known precursor to stroke, however he changed his lifestyle and habits when he was diagnosed - 6 years previously. That lifestyle change did help to save his life. He had been having the odd headache, but put it down to eyestrain - he is a writer.

Alex was sitting on the couch. Then the (undiagnosed) aneurysm in his brain popped. Instant headache. At first we didn't know what was happening - we both thought a sudden neck movement had triggered the headache. Within 10 minutes it was obvious what was happening. Luckily we are close to St Vincents and the ambulance was quick.

That was in August 2009. Alex is now a hemiplegic - paralyzed down the left side. He is also partially blind in the left eye and has short term memory loss and some cognitive issues. He lives in a nursing home. He will be 50 on 20 January.

Stroke is life destroying. Most people have no idea what stroke is, what the symptoms are or what to do if they or someone close by is experiencing a stroke. This is causing loss of life and permanent disability.

Most people think that stroke is something that happens to old people. Its not. I've met people who had a stroke at 2 months, 15, 20, 30, 46, 66 and 86. Some strokes are so minor that they don't even register initially. But the signs remain and the next one could cause significant damage. But the individual is ignorant.

It is time that STROKE is given ATTENTION and FUNDING to help PREVENT stroke. TREAT stroke - some hospitals don't have stroke specialist and treatment is ineffectual, leaving the stroke survivor in a poor state without the tools they need to improve. People also need to be EDUCATED about stroke. Knowledge can save lives.

Please, put Stroke on your agenda. Education and Funding is vital to save lives. If Alex had mentioned the headaches, then maybe he would have had a scan. That would have shown up the aneurysm and lead to preventative treatment - his life would have been different.

Stroke doesn't just affect the survivor - it affects all those around them. My life changed due to Alex's stroke too.

Yours sincerely

Christina



strokefoundation

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