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American Heart Association and Centre for Neuro Skills Deepen Relationship to Advance Stroke and Brain Injury Care

Multi-year Sponsorship Expands Across Texas and California with Educational Resources, Community Leadership and Patient Support

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. / AUSTIN, Texas (Jan. 21, 2026) — Centre for Neuro Skills (CNS) and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association have extended their strategic relationship through 2027. CNS' support of the Association launched in 2023 to forge stronger connections with health care providers, patients and caregivers while raising awareness of post-stroke care. The program has grown to include comprehensive educational campaigns, executive leadership initiatives and community engagement.

Strategic Relationship Highlights

- **Feb. 2023:** Strategic relationship announced with Live Fierce, Life is Why campaign launch; Chief Medical Officer Dr. Matthew Ashley joins the American Heart Association Central Texas Board of Directors.
- **Oct. 2023:** David Harrington, president and chief operating officer, chairs Kern County Heart and Stroke Walk.
- **May 2024:** American Stroke Association awarded CNS with a Stroke Hero Award in the Group Heroes category. The Group Hero award recognizes a group committed to educating, inspiring and bringing awareness to stroke patients; the Stroke Association also selected one of CNS' patients, Craig Northcutt, as the recipient of the Survivor Hero award.
- **Oct. 2024:** Dr. Matthew Ashley chairs the Austin Heart and Stroke Walk.
- **March 2025:** CNS and the American Heart Association launched the Neuro Skills Podcast. One episode featured Dr. Michael Petersen, an Austin-based physician and stroke survivor whose rehabilitation story is a powerful example of the impact of intensive brain injury recovery and rehabilitation.
- **Oct. 2025:** Lindsey Ashley, chief financial officer for CNS, chairs the Kern County Heart and Stroke Walk.
- **2026 and beyond**: Ongoing work advancing stroke care and brain injury awareness, including educational resources reaching thousands across Texas and California.

Collaboration, Evolution and Impact

CNS support initially focused on providing neurorehabilitation resources through the Heart Association's Live Fierce, Life is Why campaign and has expanded significantly to include:

Educational Resources and Awareness (2023-Present)

- Comprehensive multimedia Live Fierce, Life is Why campaign featuring podcasts, infographics and strategic messaging
- Educational materials reaching patients, professionals and caregivers in Texas and California
- Latest information on neurorehabilitation and treatment of acute brain injuries due to stroke
- Resources expanding knowledge of rehabilitation guidelines to address stroke patient needs

Community Leadership Initiatives

Kern County, Calif. (2023-2024) David Harrington, president and chief operating officer of Centre for Neuro Skills, served as chair for the 2023-2024 Kern County Heart and Stroke Walk, held Oct. 14, 2023, at California State University, Bakersfield. Under his leadership, the campaign engaged local companies and corporations to join the fight against heart disease and stroke — the leading causes of death in Kern County.

"Heart health is brain health. Preventing heart disease can prevent stroke," Harrington said. "The American Heart Association's Kern County Heart and Stroke Walk is a wonderful opportunity for organizations and individuals to bring awareness to the importance of heart disease and stroke prevention, learn more about how to access essential care and improve the overall health of our community."

Austin, Texas (2024) Dr. Matthew J. Ashley, chief medical officer of the Centre for Neuro Skills, served as chair of the 2024 Austin Heart and Stroke Walk, held Oct. 27, 2024, at Moody Amphitheater in Waterloo Park. The event united the Austin community for a family-friendly walk, wellness activities, Hands-Only CPR education and a celebration of survivors and their families.

"As the 2024 Austin Heart and Stroke Walk chair, it was wonderful to work with other organizations and individuals to bring awareness to the importance of heart disease and stroke prevention," Ashley said.

Foundation and Vision

"For more than 100 years, the American Heart Association has been ensuring longer, healthier lives through innovative educational efforts, including stroke prevention and treatment," said Region Senior Vice President Sara Harwood. "Our strategic initiative with Centre for Neuro Skills will deliver the most comprehensive resources to patients who have suffered brain injuries and the families that support them on their journey."

"We are thrilled to continue our collaboration with the American Heart Association to provide education and programmatic resources to families and patients who have suffered brain injuries," said Harrington. "We are both trusted brands — the American Heart Association for providing science-based information and the Centre for Neuro Skills for quality neurorehabilitation. Our relationship demonstrates how trusted brands can amplify impact."

Critical Need for Collaboration
Knowledge of treatment options and tailored treatment plans following a brain injury due to stroke is crucial to improving outcomes and increasing independence after neurorehabilitation. Strokes can vary in type and severity, so many patients and their loved ones face important decisions that need to be made quickly about rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation is key to achieving and celebrating all the small victories along the way to recovery. With the right resources and rehabilitation, stroke survivors can regain strength, courage and independence while learning about ways to prevent another stroke, like a healthy diet, physical activity and the right medications.

The resources provided by the association and Centre for Neuro Skills expand knowledge of the latest rehabilitation guidelines to properly address the needs of stroke patients and ensure everyone has access to vital resources following a traumatic brain injury.

Looking Forward
The relationship between the American Heart Association and Centre for Neuro Skills continues to grow, with both organizations committed to large-scale community efforts focused on public education and awareness regarding brain injuries and stroke care, alongside sponsorship of American Heart Association events in Austin, Fort Worth, Collin County and Houston, Texas, plus Fresno and Bakersfield, Calif. They are working together to make sure that patients and families have access to the trusted, science-based information and quality neurorehabilitation services they need.

About Centre for Neuro Skills
Centre for Neuro Skills is an experienced and respected world leader in providing intensive rehabilitation and medical programs for those recovering from all types of brain injury. Recognized as one of America's Greatest Midsize Workplaces 2025 by Newsweek, CNS covers a full spectrum of advanced care from residential and assisted living to outpatient/day treatment. Founded by Dr. Mark Ashley in 1980, CNS has eight locations in California and Texas. For more information about Centre for Neuro Skills, visit neuroskills.com, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, YouTube. For a video overview of CNS, visit our YouTube channel.

Media, please note: To request an interview with CNS leadership or clinical staff, please contact Robin Carr at 415.766.0927 or CNS@landispr.com.