

# South Carolina Leads!

- Ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysms (AAAs) remain the 10th leading cause of death in adults over 65.
- Amputation rates have increased 38% in diabetics in the past ten years.
- South Carolina leads the nation in stroke rates.

## *What can we do to make a difference?*

### **STOP** to examine for an abdominal aortic aneurysm

The incidence of ruptured AAA has not changed in 20 years! Eighty percent of patients with ruptured AAAs do not know about their AAA until the day it ruptures. And yet, 80% of these patients have been in a doctor's office in the past year. AAAs over 5.5 cm should be considered for repair.

RECOMMENDATION: Screen all men 65 years or older who have ever smoked with a single ultrasound (U.S. Preventive Health Task Force, Feb 2005).

Screen all men and women over the age of 50 with a family history of AAA (Society of Vascular Surgery).

### **LOOK** at all diabetic feet, especially smoking diabetics

At least 10% of adult-onset diabetics will eventually have an amputation. Most of these patients could avoid amputation with better foot care and management of their risk factors. Smoking diabetics are at greatest risk with a 50% five-year risk of a fatal heart attack and a 25% risk of an amputation.

RECOMMENDATION: Measure peripheral arterial perfusion with an ankle-brachial pressure index (ABI) or with transcutaneous oxygen levels.

### **LISTEN** for symptoms and signs of stroke

At least 50% of strokes have warning symptoms (transient ischemic attacks or irregular heart beat) or physical signs (carotid bruits or atrial fibrillation). Fifty percent of strokes are due to critical (>60-70%) carotid stenosis.

Another 25% are related to atrial fibrillation. Fifty percent of carotid bruits are associated with at least a 50% carotid stenosis.

RECOMMENDATION: Perform a carotid ultrasound on patients with any cerebrovascular symptoms or carotid bruits, at an accredited vascular laboratory.

