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### RECOGNIZING THE STROKE COMEBACK CENTER'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY  
OF VIRGINIA

**MR. CONNOLLY:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Stroke Comeback Center on the occasion of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the critical health care services that it provides to stroke survivors and their families in our community.

The SCC is a non-profit founded by Darlene Williamson and John Phillips in 2004 to create a community in which stroke survivors and their families could receive proper long-term treatment. Meaningful care for stroke survivors is limited in the United States, and the SCC is one of less than ten such facilities. The mission of the SCC has been to pick up where traditional health care coverage misguidedly leaves off by providing affordable speech and language services to stroke survivors in a supportive and participating environment. No patient is ever turned away because they can't afford the cost.

The current situation of stroke coverage and care is in desperate need of reform. It is common misconception that recovery is quick and easy when in reality stroke survivors require comprehensive rehabilitation for a protracted period of time to fully regenerate their cognitive and physical abilities. Yes insurance coverage for such care, if provided at all, runs out within 3-12 months, and the Medicare therapy cap for speech and physical therapy falls well short of covering the true costs. There is an

estimated direct and indirect cost of about \$73.7 billion. However, it is impossible to measure the emotional, physical, and financial burden a stroke puts on a survivor and their family.

Today, the SCC operates with about 100 individuals served in 40 groups weekly, growing from just five groups in 2005. More than a dozen committed volunteers contribute more than 3,000 hours annually. The SCC works closely with national, state, and local stroke-related organizations and receives referrals from all of the major hospital centers in the metropolitan area. Ninety-three percent of survivors report improvement in one or more areas of speaking, listening, writing or reading. On average, survivors report that they are now three times more confident in their social interactions allowing them to reestablish their role in their family and the community. The success of the SCC is due in part to their undiminished and comprehensive programs. Its life participation, group-based approach helps patients achieve their maximum potential.

Mister Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the contributions and achievements of the Stroke Comeback Center and its dedicated staff and volunteers over the past 10 years. The services and programs offered by the SCC fill a void in the rehabilitation process and significantly improve the quality of lives of stroke survivors and their families.