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**Betsy Vetter with American Heart Association honored by
North Carolina Stroke Association**

Receives NCSA's annual SHAPE Award for Stroke Advocacy, Prevention and Education

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (November 29, 2016) — Betsy Vetter, regional vice president of government relations for the American Heart Association Mid-Atlantic Affiliate, was honored for her commitment to stroke prevention with the 2016 SHAPE (**S**roke **H**eroes **A**dvocating **P**revention and **E**ducation) award from the North Carolina Stroke Association (NCSA). Vetter received her award during a special event on Nov. 22 at the UNC Center for School Leadership Development in Chapel Hill, N.C.

During her nearly 15-year tenure with the American Heart Association, Vetter has successfully advocated for NC's smoke-free restaurant and bar law as well as statewide stroke center designation and mandatory pulse oximetry screening for newborns. She is the chairman of Care4Carolina, a statewide coalition to strengthen the economic and social well-being of the state by increasing the number of people in North Carolina with access to quality affordable health care. She also serves as board chair of the NC Alliance for Health which focuses on promoting preventive public health policies, including tobacco use and obesity prevention.

"Eighty percent of strokes are preventable with important lifestyle changes including smoking cessation, weight management, hypertension control and physical fitness," said Beth Parks, executive director of the NC Stroke Association. "Betsy's leadership on statewide coalitions and public health organizations is critical to reducing the incidence and impact of stroke."

According to the American Stroke Association, stroke is the No. 5 cause of death in the United States, killing nearly 130,000 people a year. That's one in every 20 deaths. North Carolina is considered part of the nation's "Stroke Belt" – typically defined as an eight to 12-state region in the southern part of the country with substantially higher death rates from stroke.

"North Carolina is a healthier state because of the efforts of people like Betsy Vetter," said Parks. "Not only is she shining the light on the issues we face in reducing the impact of stroke, but she is actively and aggressively working to create solutions that deliver results. We are proud to honor her efforts with the 2016 SHAPE Award."

In her role with the American Heart Association, Vetter directs advocacy efforts in North Carolina and oversees grassroots and local advocacy efforts for the Mid-Atlantic Affiliate. She also serves in leadership for the Prevention and Public Awareness Committee of the Stroke Advisory Council, NC Public Health Association Advocacy Committee, and the NC Citizens for Public Health.

About the N.C. Stroke Association

*The North Carolina Stroke Association is a 501 (c) 3 organization founded in 1998 by a group of physicians and lay people who saw the need to address the state's increasing prevalence of stroke and its attendant disabilities. With operational seed money from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, NCSA began to fulfill its mission to reduce the **incidence and impact** of stroke in North Carolina through collaborations to facilitate **screening, education, outcome assessments and advocacy**. For more information, visit www.ncstroke.org.*