Community Stroke Support Services: Southeastern Ontario

Annual Report 2025-26

"Extraordinary Services for Extraordinary People"

From Hospital to Community:
Connecting People Living with Stroke
to the Right Support at the Right Time

StrokeUnderstood

Reporting Period:
April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026

Stroke Network of Southeastern Ontario
Community & LTC Coordinator
Sandra Liu

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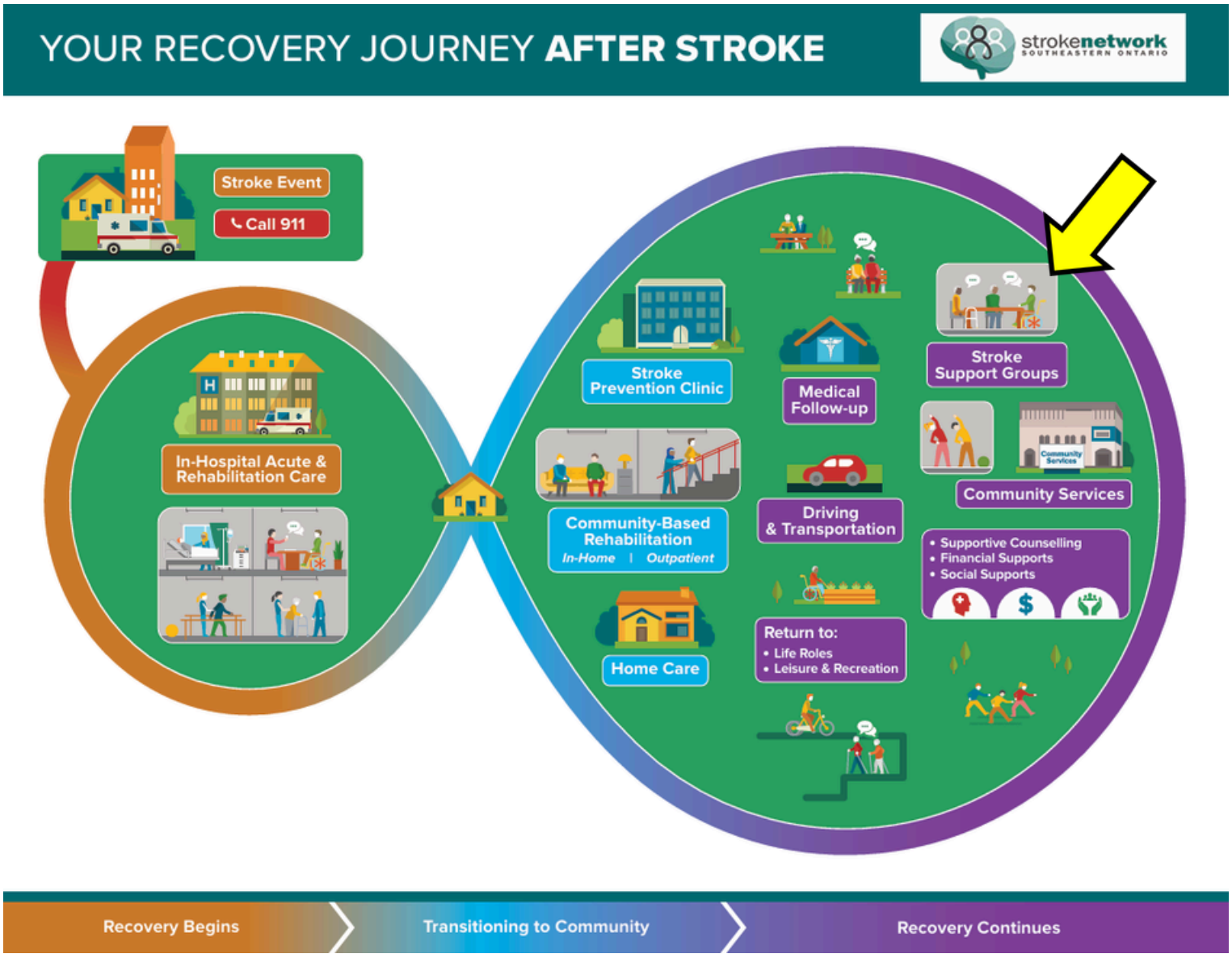
The Stroke Journey: Connecting Care Across the Continuum

While hospital-based care plays a critical role in the early stages of stroke recovery, community-based services provide essential ongoing supports that help individuals rebuild confidence, maintain connections, and continue their recovery over time.



Overview

This annual report provides an overview of Community Stroke Support Services (CSSS) and reflects the most recent fiscal year (FY) data (April 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026).

The Stroke Network of Southeastern Ontario **partners with Community Stroke Support Services Agencies** to monitor and evaluate Community Stroke Support Services. This report reviews the outstanding and innovative work demonstrated by these agencies over the past year.

Key Accomplishments 2025 - 26:

Strengthened community partnerships to expand stroke support, improve access, and create new opportunities for survivors across the region.

Expanded inclusive, accessible programming through enhanced in-person delivery, rural outreach, new community-based initiatives, including stroke-specific recreation partnerships

Increased engagement and participation by shifting toward more meaningful in-person connections and adapting programming to meet evolving needs.

2025-26 At a Glance:

337 **Participants** in Stroke Support Groups

353 **New referrals** to Stroke Support Services

76 **Participants** in **Aphasia** Conversation Groups

154 **Unique Participants** in Stroke **Exercise** Groups

CCSH CommunityCare for South Hastings

VON Live Every Day.

CPNO Senior Support Services Supporting Seniors Independence at Home and in the Community

The Role of Community Stroke Support Services

Supporting recovery, reintegration and participation beyond hospital care

Canadian Stroke Best Practices (2025) recommend that "individuals with stroke should be provided with i**nformation and referral to community-based resources** to meet ongoing physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs." Furthermore, that "social participation encompasses the ways individuals connect with others and engage in community life. For stroke survivors, maintaining social connections is essential for combating feelings of isolation and depression, which can often accompany the recovery process. Social engagement can also facilitate the sharing of experiences and resources, fostering a supportive network that aids in emotional recovery."

NEW Optimizing Activity and Community Participation following Stroke (2025)

5.3 Support for Community Participation

Healthcare team members across settings should share information and linkages about **local** support services and disability benefits with individuals with stroke, their families and caregivers [Strong recommendation; Moderate quality of evidence].

Stroke Support Groups:

- Allow participants to gain knowledge, skills, and psychosocial support from a **skilled facilitator**
- Enable **connections with peers** in the community on a similar recovery journey to expand knowledge, support and self-efficacy
- Help **gain skills** necessary to become a successful peer mentor and community advocate
- Support the healthcare system by **keeping** individuals **well in the community**

Base Funding provided in **2014-15** for community stroke support services in Southeastern Ontario

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Community Stroke Support Services of Southeastern Ontario

Annual Evaluation Report

Highlights 2025-2026

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New referrals to Stroke Support Services

"When you first get home, you don't know what services are available"

- Warm hand offs from hospital to community
- "Ask a Survivor" group connecting the hospital to community
- Peer volunteers in hospitals
- June stroke & aphasia awareness initiatives in hospitals

337

Participants in Stroke Support Groups

"Realize that you are not alone"

- Stroke support and caregiver groups
- Younger stroke survivor groups
- Evening group to support local needs

76

Participants in Aphasia Conversation Groups

"You gave them a VOICE"

- SLP-led Aphasia Conversation Groups running across the region
- Advocacy for aphasia accessibility occurring locally

154

Unique participants in Stroke Exercise Groups

"The exercise class we have is awesome"

- Virtual (KFLA & HPE)
- In-person; partnerships with YMCA (HPE)
- Incorporated in Stroke Adult Day Program (Brockville), in-person in Smiths Falls (LLG)

These achievements reflect consistent progress in delivering innovative community stroke supports. There has been an **INCREASE** in referrals and participation from last fiscal year.

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Regional Data Overview

Quarterly Data collected by Community Stroke Support Services Agencies:

- **Number of Referrals**
- **Number of Stroke Support Group Participants**
- **Number of Aphasia Conversation Group Participants**
- **Number of Stroke Exercise Group Participants**

What the Data Tells Us...

Community Stroke Support Services extend the journey of recovery beyond formal rehabilitation - connecting people living with stroke with opportunities to participate, build relationships and stay active in their communities.

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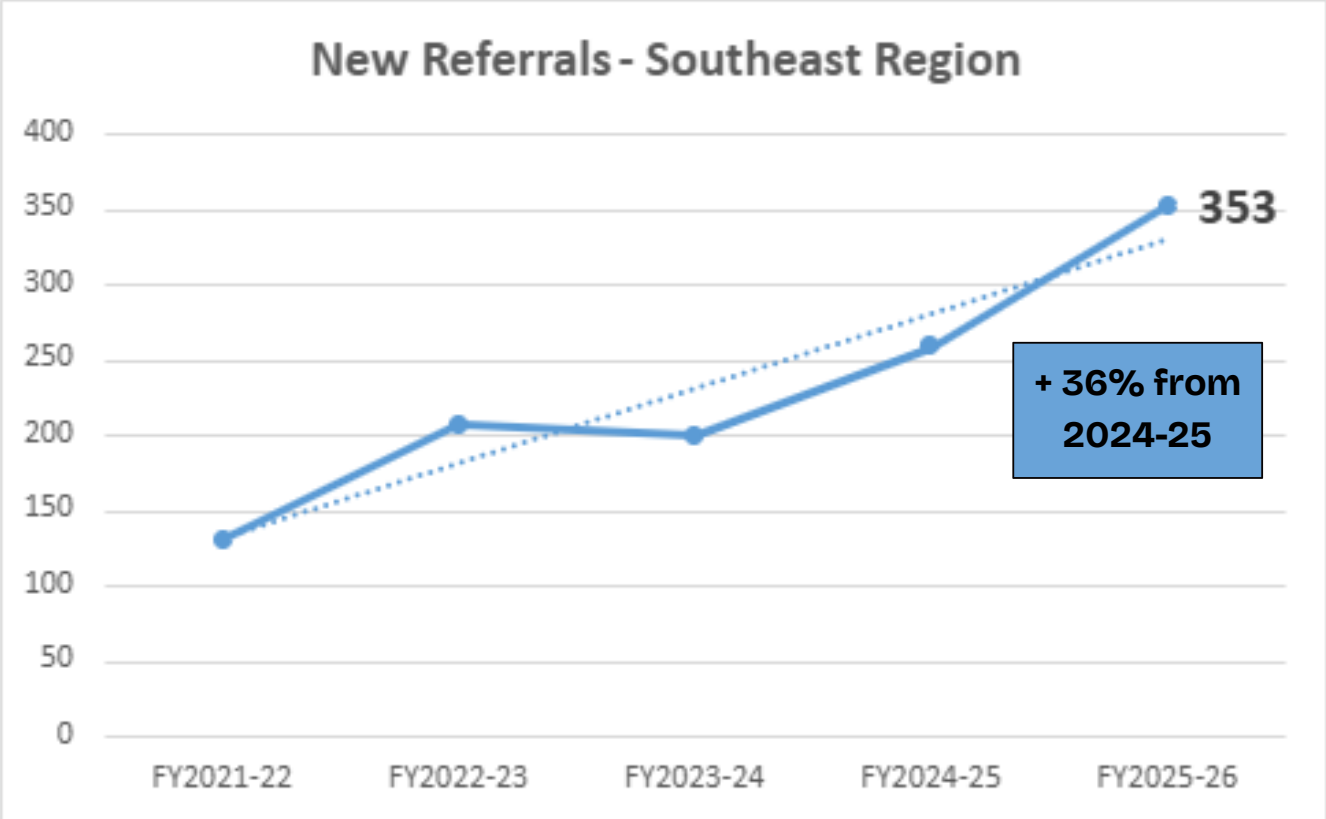
CONNECTING

More people are finding their way to support:

- ↑ 353 new referrals in 2025-26
- ↑ 36% from the previous year
- ↑ 170% since 2021-22



What the Data Tells Us...

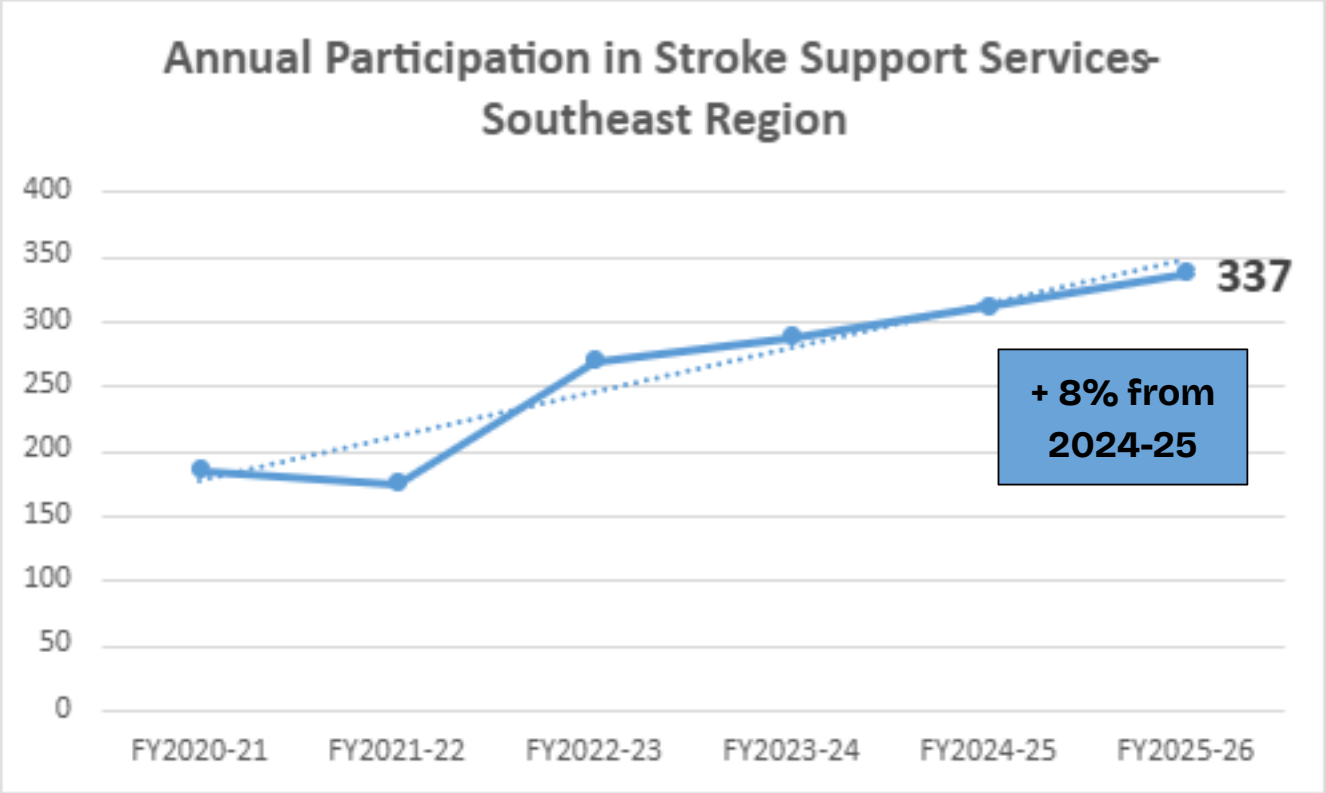
Community Stroke Support Services continue to connect more people with programs, resources and opportunities following stroke. New referrals increased from 131 in 2021-22 to 353 in 2025-26 represting substantial growth in reach across southeastern Ontario.

Referral is the first step. What happens when people connect with services?

PARTICIPATING

People are turning connections into particpation

- ↑ 337 unique participants in 2025-26
- ↑ 8% from the previous year
- ↑ 93% since 2021-22



What the Data Tells Us...

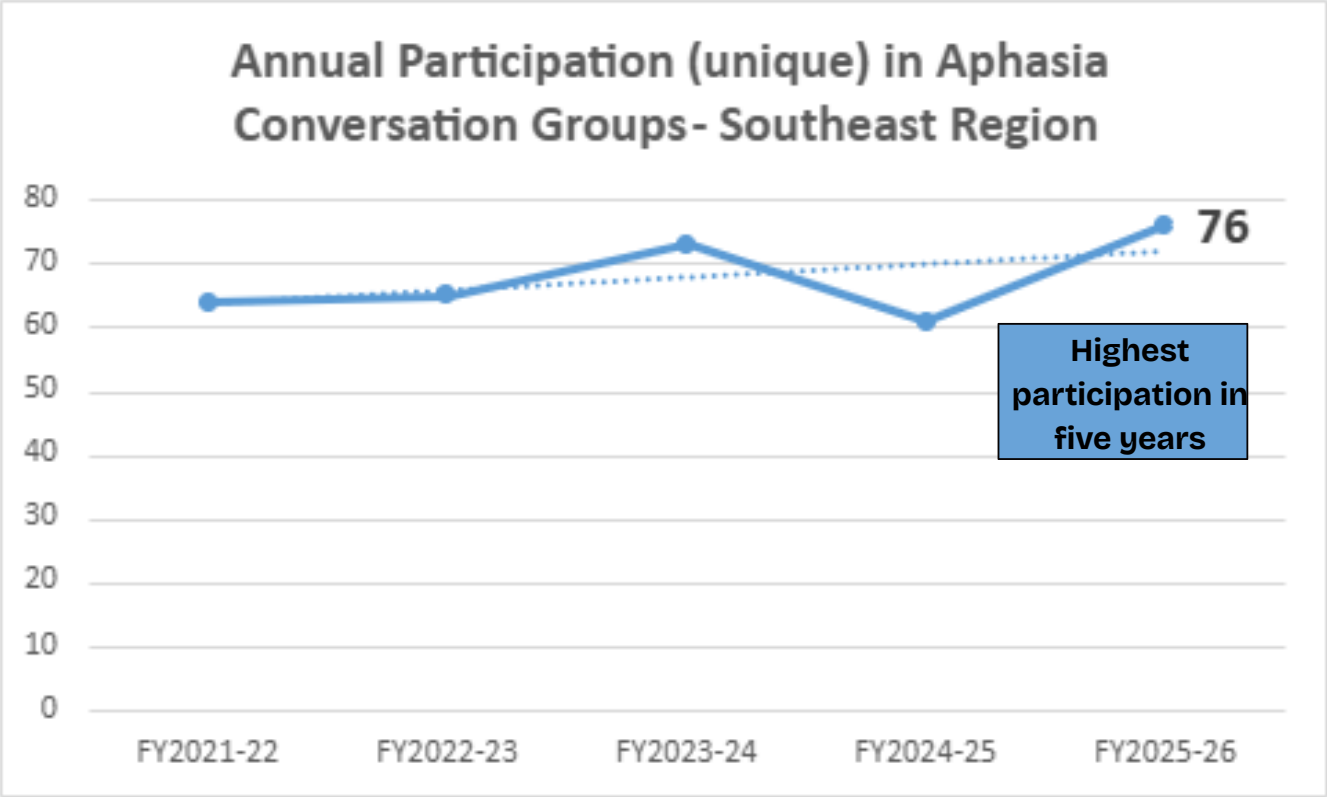
The growth in referrals is translating into participation. In 2025-26, 337 people participated in community stroke support services across southeastern Ontario - an 8% increase from the previous year and nearly double the number participating five years ago.

Participation can mean more than attending a program. For many people, it creates opportunities for connection and belonging.

BELONGING

Conversation creates connection after stroke

- 76 aphasia conversation group (unique) participants in 2025-26
- Highest participation in five years with an increase of 25% from the previous year



What the Data Tells Us...

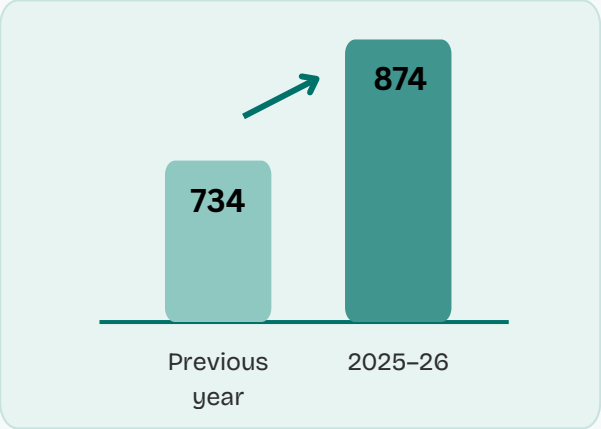
For people living with aphasia, conversation groups provide opportunities to practice communication skills, connect with others and participate in meaningful social interaction. Participation has remained relatively consistent over the past five years, reaching its highest level in 2025-26.

Connection is one part of life after stroke. Staying active is another.

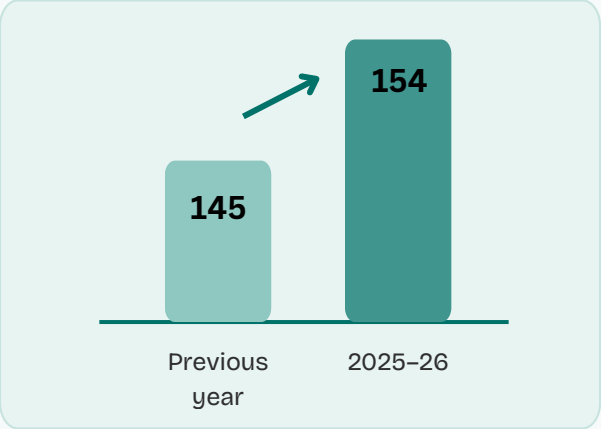
MOVING

Community programs are adapting and people are staying active:

- 874 total exercise group participants in 2025-26
  ↑19% from the previous year
- 154 unique exercise group participants
  ↑6% from the previous year



Total Participation



Unique Participants

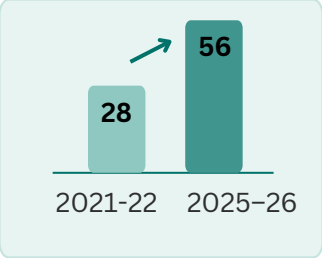
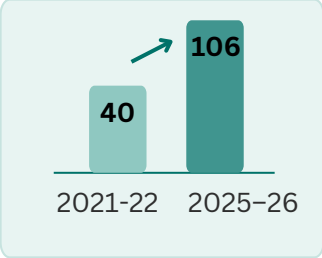
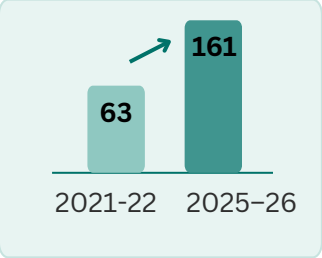
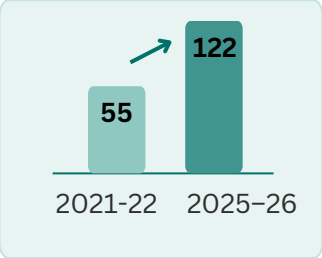
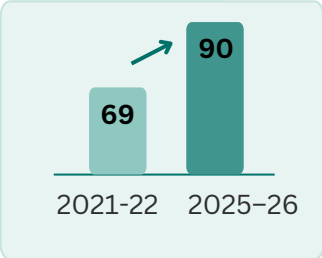
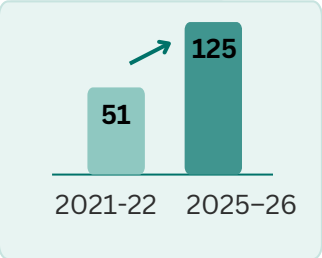
What the Data Tells Us...

Community stroke exercise programs continued to engage people living with stroke while adapting to changes in program delivery, location and capacity. In 2025-26, total participation increased by 19%, while the number of unique particpants increased by 6%. Programs adapted through a combination of in-person, virtual and integrated programming, demonstrating the continued importance of accessible opportunities for physical activity following stroke.

Community Stroke Support Services - Local Impact

Growth Across Our Communities

Over the <u>past five fiscal years</u>, community stroke support services has continued to grow across HPE, KFLA and LLG

Community Care for South Hastings (CCSH) Hastings Prince Edward (HPE)	**Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) - Greater Kingston** Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington (KFLA)	**Senior Support Services -LLG** Lanark, Leeds and Grenville (LLG)
New Referrals 	**New Referrals** 	**New Referrals** 
Annual Participation 	**Annual Participation** 	**Annual Participation** 

What the Data Tells Us...

↑ Growing Referrals ↑ Growing Participation

Community Stroke Support Services continues to demonstrate growing and sustained local demand and reach.

Program Highlights Across Southeastern Ontario

- Evolving Supports & Local Innovations -

Community Care for South Hastings (CCSH)
Hastings Prince Edward (HPE)

- Art Upper Limb Based Therapy with OT/OTA
- Various Stroke Support Groups (e.g. Survivor, Caregiver, Younger Stroke, Evening)
- Aphasia Conversation Group
- Hospital to Community Connections with Quinte Health (Belleville)
- Stroke exercise virtually and in-person (Belleville & Trenton)
- Stroke day program in partnership with Pathways to Independence
- Partnership with Loyalist College OTA/PTA in person and virtual exercise/cognitive stimulation activities
- Community social events and community advocacy/awareness initiatives
- Regional Stroke Education Program for survivors and caregivers
- **NEW** Stroke-specific swim program in partnership with Pathways to Independence and Quinte Sports & Wellness Centre
- **NEW** Music Program "Hope in Harmony"
- **NEW** Caregiver group with Quinte Health (Belleville)
- **NEW** Stroke Support Group in Bancroft in partnership with Quinte Health

Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) - Greater Kingston
Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington (KFLA)

- Various Stroke Support Groups (e.g. Caregiver, Peer Support, Evening Group) - offered in-person and virtually
- Aphasia Conversation Groups
- Aphasia Buddies, Aphasia Peer Support Groups & Aphasia Topics Group
- Hospital to Community Connections with Providence Care Hospital
- Stroke exercise (virtual)
- Stroke day programs (e.g. VON Stroke Survivor Day Program - Bath, and Pathways to Independence for additional day program)
- Community partnerships with Queen's University and St. Lawrence College
- Community social events and community advocacy/awareness initiatives
- Regional Stroke Education Program for survivors and caregivers
- **NEW** Expand referral pathway and connections with Kingston Health Science Centre Acute Stroke Team
- **NEW** Art Upper Limb Based Therapy group

Senior Support Services -LLG
Lanark, Leeds and Grenville (LLG)

- Various In-Person Stroke Support Groups (e.g. Caregiver, Peer Support in Brockville and Perth)
- Hospital to Community Connections with both Perth and Brockville General Hospitals
- Community social events (BBQ's, picnics, holiday dinners)
- Stroke exercise incorporated in Stroke Adult Day program in Brockville
- Stroke day program
- Community social events and community advocacy/awareness initiatives
- Regional Stroke Education Program for survivors and caregivers
- **NEW location** - Stroke exercise in person in Smiths Falls
- **Weekly** Aphasia Conversation Groups (alternating between Brockville and Perth)

Participant Perspectives

> “ Very helpful to meet others who’ve survived stroke experience - a wonderful feeling of community.

> “ The Stroke Support Group Facilitator is my rock. She is here WOW all the time.

> “ I am now in my seventh year living with a stroke and I am blessed to help others by doing community talks. Most people believe it will never happen to them. If people leave my presentations knowing the symptoms of stroke and to call 911 immediately, then it is worth sharing my story.

CCSH CommunityCare for South Hastings

VON Live Every Day.

Senior Support Services
Supporting Seniors Independence at Home and in the Community

Key Achievements:

Access & Engagement -
Expand opportunities for stroke survivors and caregivers through stroke support groups, aphasia conversation groups, exercise programs and wellness initiatives.

Partnerships & Collaboration -
Strengthened hospital - community connections and partnerships to improve transitions, navigation, and access to stroke supports.

Awareness & Advocacy -
Advanced stroke and aphasia awareness through community education, outreach and advocacy initiatives.

Inclusion & Innovation -
Developed responsive programming approaches that support diverse needs, increased participation and enhance community connection.

Sustainability & Growth -
Supported continued development of community stroke support services through program expansion, data collection, and partnership opportunities.

Looking Ahead: Continued Priorities

Sustain Services

Enhance the capacity and sustainability of community stroke support services.

Improve Navigation

Strengthen connections across the stroke continuum to support transitions and access.

Promote Inclusion

Advance equitable access and participation in stroke programming.

Demonstrate Impact

Use partnerships, innovation, and data to support ongoing improvement.

Community Stroke Support Services

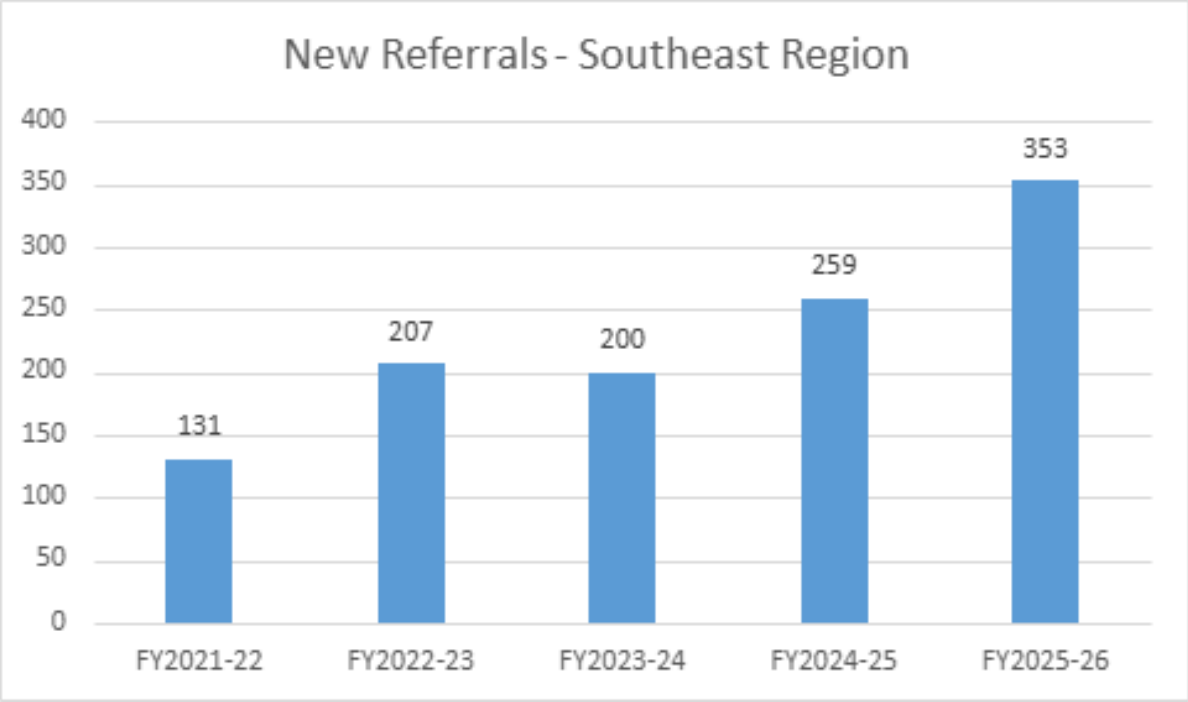
Data Reference Library:

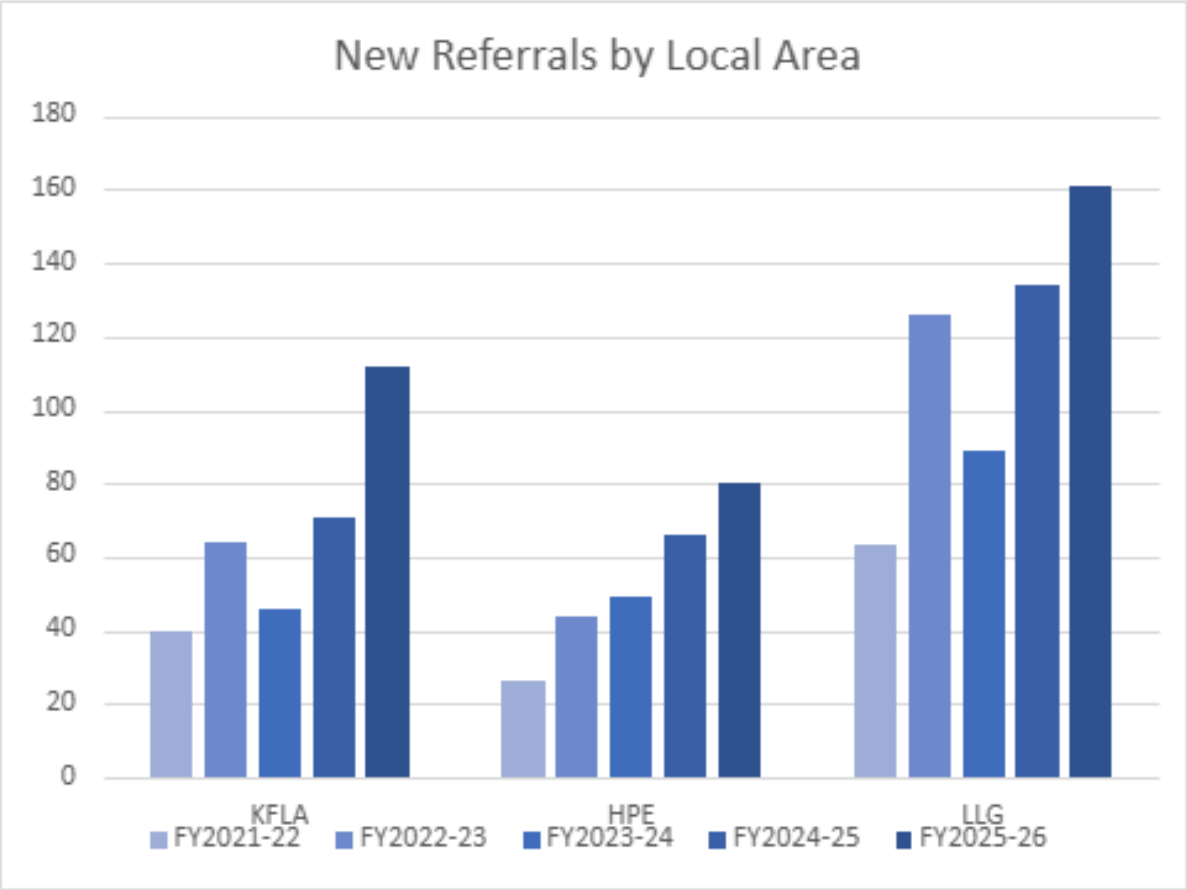
A detailed reference of regional and local service data supporting the 2025-2026 Annual Evaluation Report.

The following pages provide the detailed data supporting the key findings presented in the main report. The main report uses selected data to highlight trends, participation and engagement across Southeastern Ontario, while this reference library provides the underlying regional and local-area data for further review.
Definitions and contextual notes are included with individualized measures to support intepretation.

Data Overview

Number of Referrals:





These graphs demonstrate the number of referrals annually over the past 5 fiscal years

- **Noted is the steady increase in referrals**
- **Noted is an approximate 36% increase compared to the previous fiscal year**

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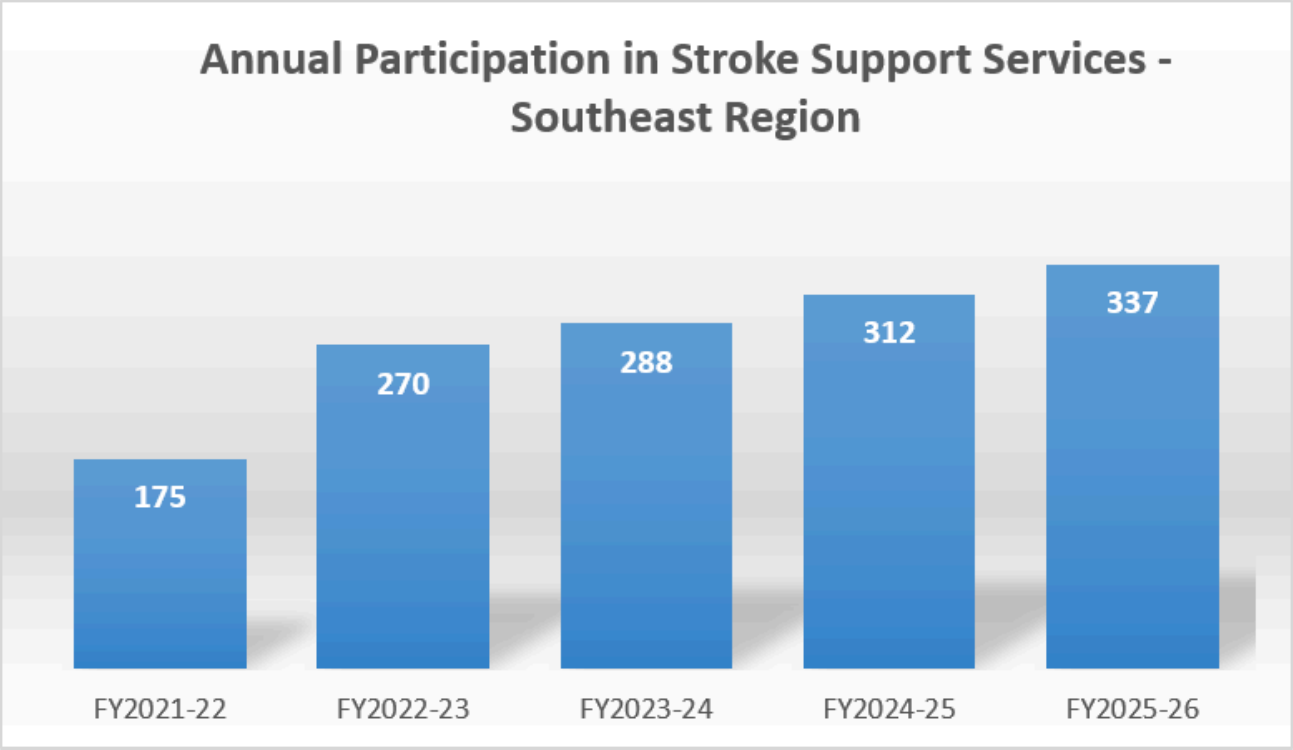
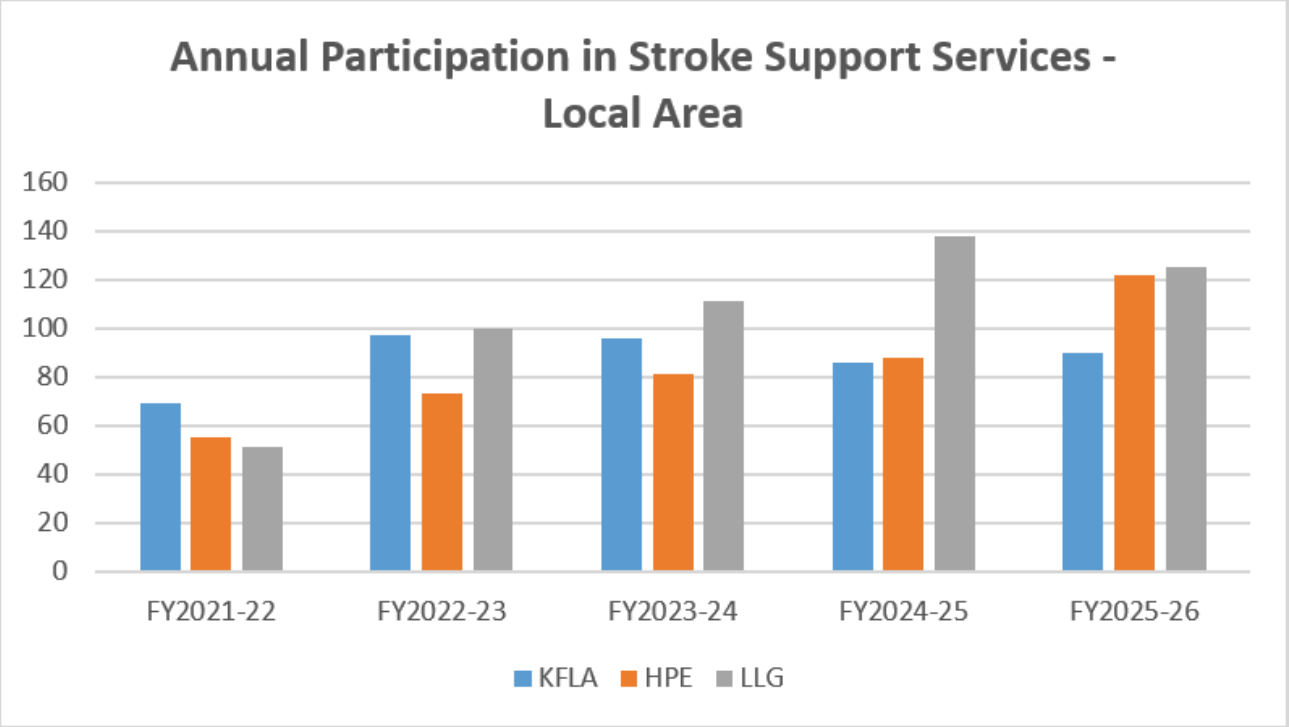
Data Overview

Number of Stroke Support Group Participants:





These graphs compare annual participation levels over the past 5 fiscal years

- **Represents total unique participants**
- **Steady increase in participation levels; 8% from previous fiscal year**

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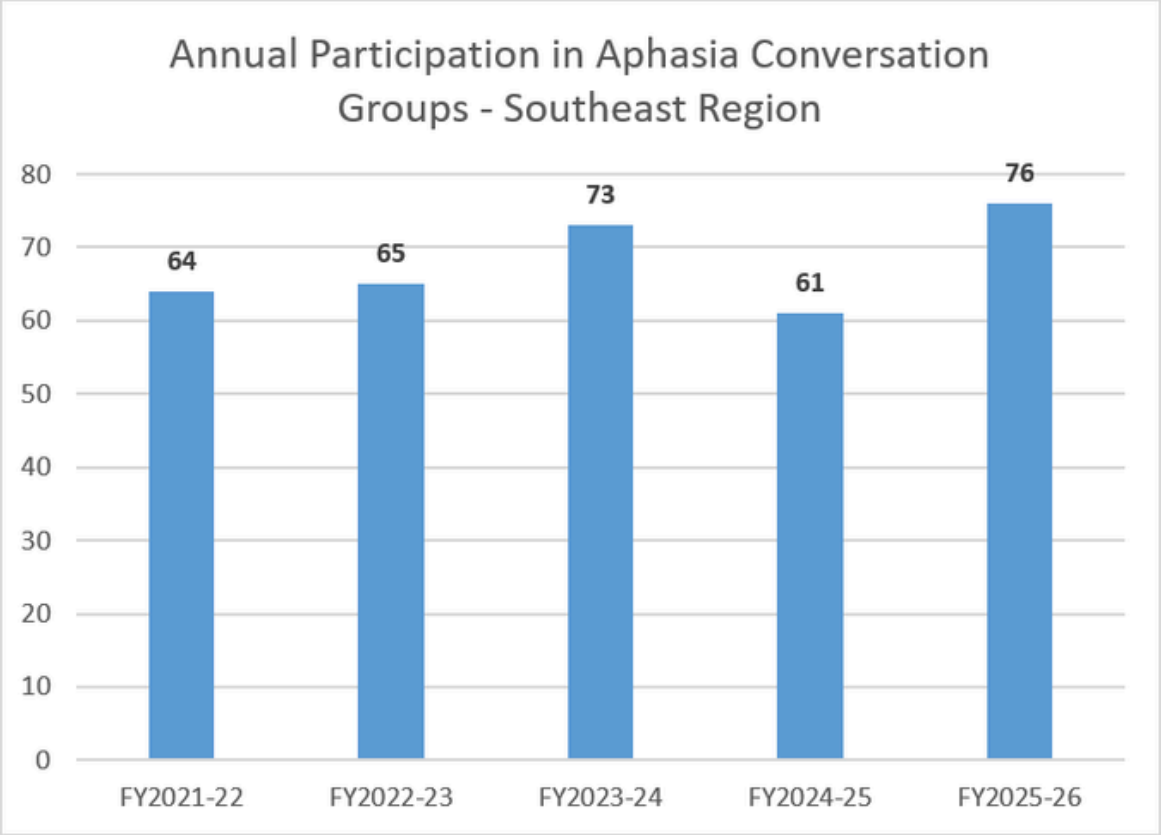
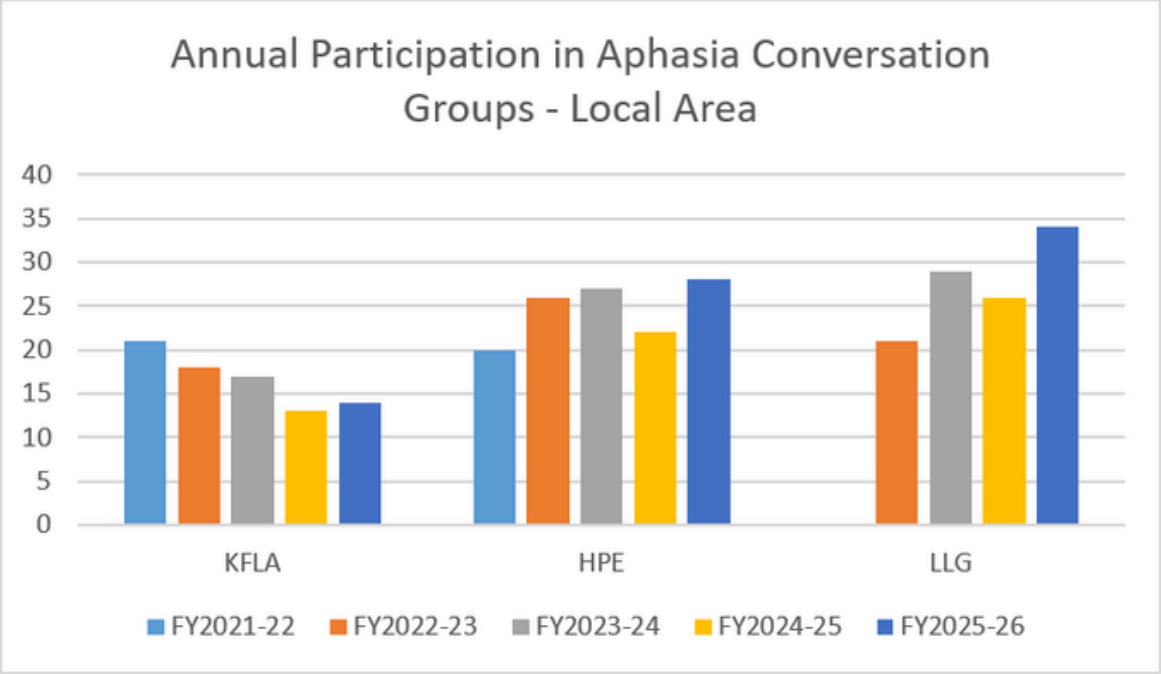
Data Overview

Number of Aphasia Conversation Group Participants:





These graphs compare annual participation levels over the past 5 fiscal years

- **Represents total unique participants**
- **Increase in participation levels of approximately 25% from previous fiscal year**

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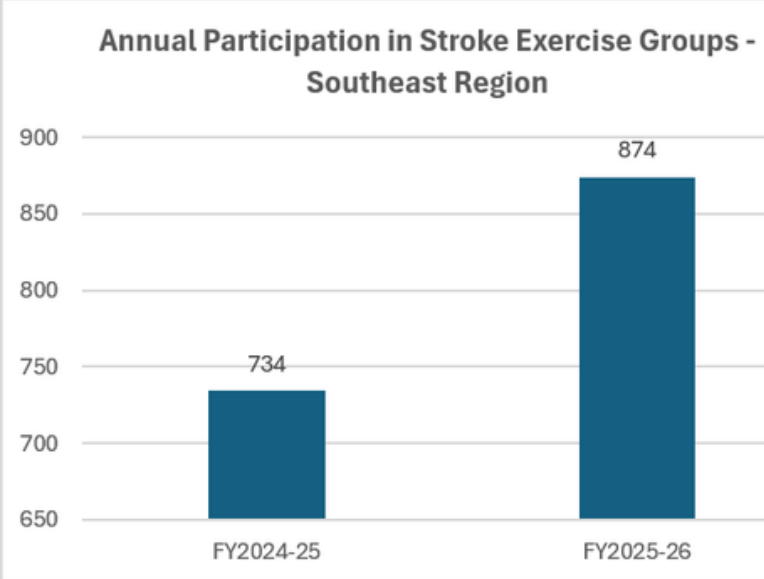
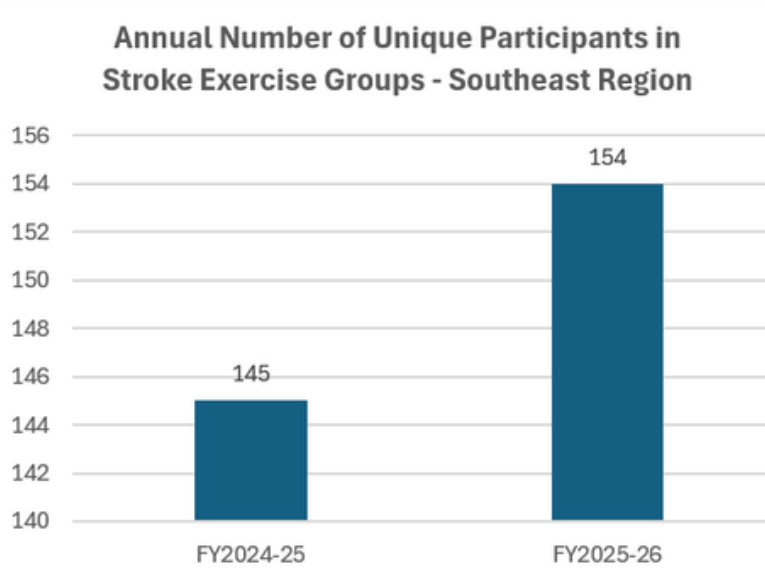
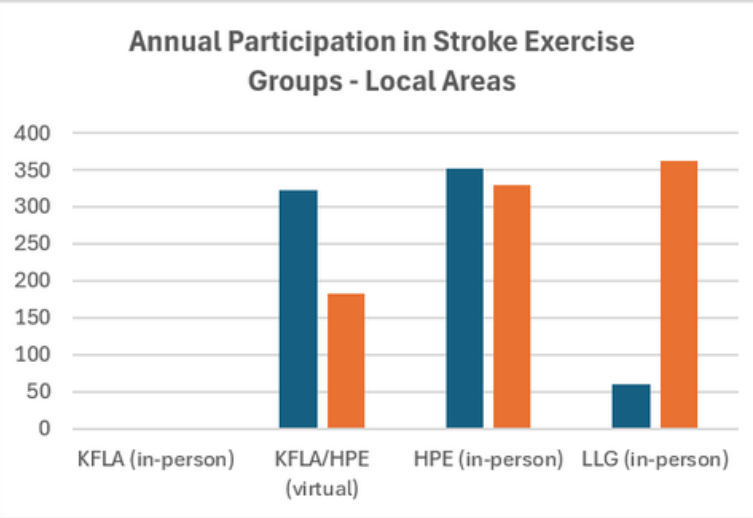
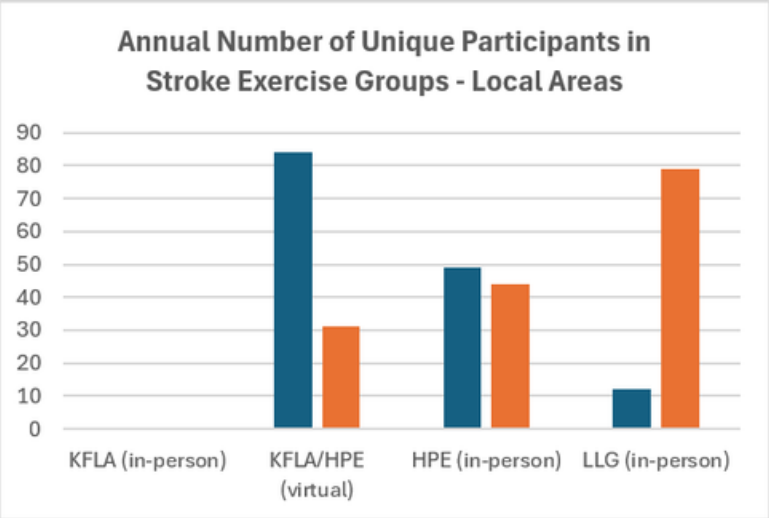
Data Overview

Number of Stroke Exercise Group Participants:









- KFLA – in-person on hold; actively recruiting for exercise instructor
- KFLA – virtual 1x/week
- HPE – in-person in Trenton 1x/week and Belleville 1x/week
- HPE – virtual 1x/week
- LLG - in-person in Perth, change to Smiths Falls in Q4
- LLG – in-person in Brockville (Stroke Adult Day Program)

These graphs compare annual participation levels over the past 2 fiscal years

- **VON supports KFLA & HPE in-person and virtual programs**
- **VON KFLA continues to explore opportunities to resume in-person programming, with recruitment and suitable space availability as key considerations**
- **VON experienced a reduction in exercise supervisor capacity in Q4 (Kingston office)**
- **Senior Support Services LLG supports in-person programming, which moved from Perth to Smiths Falls in Q4**
- **Brockville programming incorporated into Stroke Adult Day**
- **Increase in regional unique participants of approximately 6.2% from previous fiscal year**

References:

Canadian Stroke Best Practices. (2025). Recommendations: NEW Optimizing Activity and Community Participation following Stroke. Rehabilitation, Recovery and Community Participation following Stroke - Part Three 7th Edition. https://www.strokebestpractices.ca/recommendations/activity-participation-following-stroke/5-participation-in-social-and-leisure-activities-following-stroke

Healing Through Art: Loyalist Students Lead Innovative Stroke Rehabilitation Program https://www.inquinte.ca/2026/04/healing-through-art-loyalist-students-lead-innovative-stroke-rehabilitation-program/

Stroke can happen at any age: local event highlights warning signs and importance of calling 911. Who Cares. A resource for those who care. (2026). https://who-cares.care/2026/06/17/stroke-can-happen-at-any-age-local-event-highlights-warning-signs-and-importance-of-calling-911/

What We Heard: Enhancing Individualized Community Stroke Services. 2023 Consultation Report.

Abbreviations:

CCSH	Community Care for South Hastings
CSSS	Community Stroke Support Services
FY	Fiscal Year
HPE	Hastings Prince Edward
KFLA	Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington
LLG	Lanark, Leeds and Grenville
LTC	Long-Term Care
OT	Occupational Therapy
OTA	Occupational Therapy Assistant
PTA	Physiotherapy Assistant
SLP	Speech Language Pathologist
VON	Victorian Order of Nurses