

**MGHS PURSUES JOINT COMMISSION
PRIMARY STROKE CENTER CERTIFICATION IN 2009**

August 7, 2009

Primary stroke center certification signifies a commitment to excellence in stroke care and compliance with national standards. It also demonstrates organized program management, performance improvement and educational engagement with both stroke patients and hospital staff. MGHS currently participates in the **Get With The Guidelines- Stroke Program**, a hospital-based data reporting and quality improvement program for acute stroke care. Our core stroke team consists of Dr. Roman Politi-Neurologist, Dr. Steven Verbridge-ED, Laurie Neldberg-Weesen, RN - Neuroscience Program Director and Jeanette Stebelton, RN-Stroke Clinical Coordinator.

During the past 12 months numerous in-patient projects have been facilitated to deliver a comprehensive approach to stroke care. The Medical Unit has been designated as the stroke unit for stable stroke & TIA patients. The unstable stroke patient or those who have received t-PA will be admitted to ICU. By choosing core units to care for stroke patients, we can ensure staff compliance and familiarity with new protocols, care pathways and assessment tools such as the NIH stroke scale and the MGHS dysphasia/swallow screen. This will improve compliance with standards and positively impact stroke patient outcomes.

An ongoing goal for the stroke program is to increase public awareness regarding the signs and symptoms of stroke and the urgency with which stroke victims must be treated. **Identifying the onset of symptoms greatly improves clinical outcomes.** Reducing complications of stroke is a key focus for improving outcomes as well. We are striving to teach stroke victims and their families that hospital arrival is faster for those who use EMS via 911. The use of EMS is strongly associated with shorter time periods from symptom onset to hospital arrival and decreased time to initial physician examination, CT scans and neurology consult.

The MDCH is sponsoring a workshop called Advanced Stroke Life Support on Sept 30, 2009, at NMU (in UP-EMS brochure). The course will address pre-hospital and general management of an acute stroke. Space is limited. Please see the UP-EMS brochure for further enrollment information.

Should you have questions or want more information about the MGHS

Stroke Program, please call Jeanette Stebelton, RN, at 225-7587.