



Saint Anthony's Join Regional Stroke Network

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(Alton, IL) – Saint Anthony's Health Center recently joined the MidAmerica Stroke Network, a collaborative system of hospitals that shares knowledge, educational opportunities and technologies to provide high-level stroke care for individuals.

Launched by Saint Louis University Hospital in April 2008, the Network is committed to providing current and clinically-effective stroke care to patients in the member hospitals' respective communities. The Network is the first and only one of its kind in the region.

“With this collaboration, Saint Anthony's is providing the most current and clinically effective stroke care for individuals in our community,” says E.J. Kuiper, President & CEO of Saint Anthony's. The benefits for both the hospital and patients in the region include 24-hour access to the Network hotline, cutting edge technology and equipment, access to research and clinical trials in stroke care, as well as ongoing medical and public educational opportunities.

Saint Louis University Hospital, a certified Stroke Center of Excellence by The Joint Commission, created the MidAmerica Stroke Network to promote quality stroke care measures throughout the region. SLUCare neurologists assist medical teams in emergency rooms at participating Network hospitals by offering consultative and diagnostic services at no cost in potential stroke cases.

The Network helps support Saint Anthony's emergency medical team to effectively treat stroke patients on-site in a timely manner, which may improve patient outcomes and possibly identify those patients who may benefit from a higher level of care. Patients presenting in Saint Anthony's Emergency Department with stroke-like symptoms receive the most current standards of care established by the American Stroke

Association and the Brain Attack Coalition, including the administration of tPA (a clot busting medication used for some stroke victims) within 180 minutes of the onset of symptoms.

After the initial evaluation, diagnosis and treatment at Saint Anthony's, the patient may be transferred to Saint Louis University (SLU) Hospital for advanced stroke treatment.

The overall goal is to help patients recover quickly and completely, reducing the risk of permanent brain damage and improving patient outcomes, Kuiper says.

A national quality improvement initiative of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association to improve care for stroke calls for a CT scan of the brain to be initiated and interpreted within 45 minutes of arrival. At Saint Anthony's, current turnaround CT time is less than 20 minutes, which allows for early intervention and helps to decrease the potential of long-term effects of a stroke.

"Our average 'door to report' time for obtaining a CT of the brain is 25 minutes for *all* patients that present with stroke-like symptoms without a final diagnosis of stroke," Kuiper says. "And the average 'door to report' time for CT results for patients actually *diagnosed* with stroke is 16 minutes.

"Because of the coordinated efforts with local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers, our Emergency Department physicians can be waiting at the door to transfer the patient directly to a CT scan."

According to a five-year study by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), stroke patients who receive tPA within three hours of the onset of stroke symptoms are at least 30 percent more likely to recover with little or no disability after three months. However, only a small percentage of stroke patients in the U.S. receive tPA according to these guidelines.

Saint Anthony's was recently recognized by The Joint Commission as a Top Performer on Key Quality Measures in the nation for delivering outstanding patient care.

"The collaboration with MidAmerica Stroke Network with Saint Anthony's brings a higher level of stroke care to our area, by benefitting the patients, supporting our clinicians and improving access to even more specialized health care for the RiverBend community," Kuiper adds.