

Telemedicine speeds up stroke treatment at AMH

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ALTON – Alton Memorial Hospital now has real-time access to some of the nation’s top stroke experts—even when they’re not onsite.

AMH has begun using stroke telemedicine to receive direct care consults for complicated stroke patients. Phone, Internet and video conferencing allows Stroke Network neurologists and radiologists to be “remotely present” at distant hospitals.

Together with the partner hospital, physicians can diagnose stroke patients, begin timely treatment with the clot-dissolving drug tPA, and arrange for transport, if needed.

“For acute stroke care, telemedicine means faster, more accurate on-site treatment of patients,” said Kyle Ogle, the AMH Stroke Center coordinator. “For patients, it means receiving local care while still benefitting from the expertise of a certified Comprehensive Stroke Center.”

Using wireless Internet, a Washington University physician at Barnes-Jewish Hospital is able to participate in a remote consult which consists of a two-way audio/video feed. This technology allows the expert and patient to see and hear each other. The stroke specialist can then conduct his or her own neurological exam and interact directly with the patient, family and local medical staff. At the same time, the Washington University stroke expert has immediate access to current vital signs, test results and imaging.

The remote consult is an effective tool in getting patients diagnosed and appropriate treatment started as quickly as possible.

There is precious little time to waste when treating a stroke patient. Doctors and nurses at Alton Memorial Hospital are now able to save valuable seconds through stroke telemedicine with the Washington University Acute Neurological Emergency Consulting Service.

Benefits include:

- Immediate 24/7 access to Washington University stroke specialists, vascular neurosurgeons, endovascular interventionalists, neuro-intensivists, general neurologists and neuroradiologists.
- Real-time, face-to-face video examination of acute stroke patients and neuroimaging by stroke specialists.
- Assistance of Washington University stroke team in acute management decisions (tPA), and consultation on rapid transfer for more advanced care needs (thrombectomy, craniectomy).
- Consulting specialists' familiarity with local resources provides more efficient transfers.
- Access to innovative treatments through Washington University School of Medicine clinical trials.
- Development of stronger relationship with Washington University stroke team for enhanced patient care.

Facilitation of return to local community for primary care or neurological follow-up or rehabilitation.

