



Angela Nelson, BSN, RN named Stroke Coordinator at HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital

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O'FALLON – HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital recently named Angela Nelson, BSN, RN, Stroke Coordinator for HSHS St. Elizabeth's Teleneurology Stroke Program.

Nelson, a resident of Okawville, Illinois, has experience as a critical care RN in the Cardiac Catheterization Lab and Emergency Department. Her leadership roles in the

Cardiology as well as Physician and Outreach Services have allowed her to explore clinical growth, leadership, development, and networking opportunities that ultimately focus on the best possible outcomes for residents in the area.

She has been a Registered Nurse since 2006 and is currently enrolled in the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program at McKendree University with a focus on Leadership and Management. Upon completion, she will apply to the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. Her certifications include Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), National Resuscitation Program (NRP) and Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC).

In the Stroke Coordinator role, Nelson is responsible for developing clinical care standards and appropriate services for stroke care, tracking data and ensuring compliance with national stroke measures. Additionally, she aids in rapid response of acute stroke patients and assists with the use of telemedicine to provide comprehensive stroke assessment and treatment.

“It is my honor to serve St. Elizabeth’s Hospital and our region as a leader in acute stroke care,” said Nelson. “I plan to continue building our relationship with the community and EMS that will provide the education needed to help patients get to the hospital quicker, which can improve outcomes after stroke. It is a privilege to be part of a team that saves lives and gives second chances.”

On January 6, 2017, Nelson was affected personally by stroke. “I was circulating a case when I received notification that my father suffered a massive stroke. He was doing what he loved most, writing stories for a community he loved. That day changed my life forever, however I have used that tragedy to focus on improving outcomes for patients over the entire region,” she noted.

St. Elizabeth’s Hospital has served as an Emergent Stroke Ready Hospital for the region since 2014, as designated by the Illinois Department of Public Health. St. Elizabeth’s was the first hospital in the Metro East to gain this designation. The Emergent Stroke Ready Hospital designation ensures that St. Elizabeth’s Hospital is prepared to adhere to written emergency stroke protocols and is able, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to provide the following:

- thrombolytic therapy (tPA) used to break or dissolve blood clots,
- brain image testing (CT scans), and
- blood coagulation studies.

The American Heart Association (AHA) notes that strokes are the fifth leading cause of death in the United States, and is one of the most preventable causes of disability.

Nelson additionally stresses that 80 percent of strokes are preventable by controlling risk factors like smoking, obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

“It is important to catch a stroke early, but even more important to prevent strokes. Recognizing signs and symptoms of stroke and immediately going to an acute stroke ready facility, like St. Elizabeth’s, can make a difference in the number of treatment options available for stroke patients,” said Nelson. “A strong stand against stroke takes powerful collaboration and training. St. Elizabeth’s Hospital has assembled the right doctors, technology and stroke-ready team to treat a stroke FAST.”

The public is encouraged to learn the signs and symptoms of a stroke, which include:

- sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- sudden difficulty seeing in one or both eyes, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, sudden severe headache with no known cause.

Follow this F.A.S.T. acronym if someone is exhibiting any of the above symptoms:

- **FACE** – Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?
- **A RMS** – Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- **SPEECH**– Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?
- **TIME** – If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

St. Elizabeth’s also offers a free Stroke Support Group for patients and family members affected by stroke. To learn more or to attend, call 618-234-2120, ext. 52004. For more information on St. Elizabeth’s Emergent Stroke Ready Designation and Stroke Telemedicine Program visit, www.steliz.org.

HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Hospital is part of the Southern Illinois Division of Hospital Sisters Health System, which also includes HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital in Effingham, HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital in Breese, HSHS Holy Family Hospital in Greenville, and HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital in Highland.