



# AMH Working Toward Becoming Certified Stroke Center

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ALTON, IL -- What makes the difference between a stroke patient walking out of the hospital rather than being pushed in a wheelchair? Going back to work rather than going to rehab? Living rather than dying? Stroke experts say the difference is time.

“Time is brain” is the stroke care mantra. The faster a stroke patient is diagnosed and gets appropriate care -- including the administration of the clot-busting drug tPA -- after the onset of stroke symptoms, the more likely he or she will have a good outcome. And that is just what is happening at Alton Memorial Hospital

“We are working to design a program that will enable us to become the Metro East area’s first Joint Commission-certified stroke center,” says Dr. Rodger Hanco, stroke medical director at Alton Memorial Hospital. Dr. Hanco is board certified in Internal Medicine and Critical Care Medicine. “We have a strong stroke team in place and have been building our neurological resources to better serve patients and families dealing with the difficult diagnosis of a stroke.”

As a member of BJC HealthCare, the Alton Memorial stroke team already has protocols in place to immediately connect by phone with the Washington University stroke care physicians at Barnes-Jewish Hospital as soon as an acute stroke case arrives. Barnes-Jewish Hospital is recognized as a national leader in stroke care and was certified as the first primary stroke center in the region.

“In addition to our team, Alton Memorial has immediate access to stroke experts at Washington University/Barnes-Jewish if we need a level of care not available in our community,” says Dr. Hanco. “Patients can remain local and receive outstanding stroke care in the right location and closer to home, family and friends.”

For more information about the Acute Stroke Center at Alton Memorial Hospital, please contact Stroke Center coordinator Stephanie Watson, RN, by calling (618) 463-7514.

**Photo: Dr. Rodger Hanko, medical director, and Stephanie Watson, coordinator, form the Stroke Center team at Alton Memorial Hospital.**