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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Martin C. Dodrill

Director of Planning & Marketing

JOINT TOWNSHIP DISTRICT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
200 St. Clair Street
St. Marys, Ohio 45885-2400

P | 419-394-3387 ext. 3568
F | 419-394-8485
E | mdodrill@jtdmh.org
W | www.grandlakehealth.org

Joint Township District Memorial Hospital Collaborates with Ohio State's Wexner Medical Center to Offer Advanced Stroke Care

Joint Township District Memorial Hospital and Grand Lake Health System have joined Ohio State's stroke telemedicine network bringing rapid access to advanced stroke care to our community.

Ohio State is the hub for the stroke telemedicine network, which is funded by a $265,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Health.

When a suspected stroke patient arrives to Joint Township District Memorial Hospital emergency department, a "stroke alert" is activated if appropriate, which mobilizes a team of stroke experts who, through the use of telemetry and real-time testing and patient interview, can help the care team at JTDMH determine the best treatment options for the patients.

Research published in the September 14, 2011 issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology, suggests that telestroke is cost-effective for rural hospitals that don't have a neurologist or stroke specialist on staff around the clock and provides greater access to the clot-busting treatment, tPA.

Ohio State's stroke team, which includes critical care physicians and vascular neurosurgeons, is available any time, day or night.

The window of time for successfully treating stroke victims is short, usually less than three hours. Doctors feel the use of real-time technology will save more lives in rural areas of the state.

The goals of the telestroke program are to:

1. Increase access to advanced stroke care in underserved regions of Ohio
2. Improve EMS response and recognition of stroke signs and symptoms
3. Enhance quality and efficiency within the health care system.

As a primary stroke center in the state, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center was the first academic medical center in Ohio to go live with telestroke and the first health system in Ohio to extend their network beyond affiliate hospitals. Ohio State serves as the hub of the telestroke network and provides other hospitals with rapid access to board certified vascular neurologists who can provide real-time consultation to physicians at the proximity hospitals using video equipment, CT scans and the web based software.

Utilization of a stroke telemedicine network enables hospitals, particularly those in rural areas, to have real-time access to the same expertise and protocols as available at a tertiary care center and for virtually no additional cost.

"Telestroke will allow us to bring the specialized stroke expertise to the bedside at the local community hospital in a fast and efficient way," said Dr. Michel Torbey, Medical Director of Ohio State's Wexner Medical Center's Neurovascular Stroke Center. ■

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