



The Stroke Program at Rush receives American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines Gold Performance Achievement Award

CHICAGO 2009-- The Stroke Program at Rush recently received the American Stroke Association's Get With The GuidelinesSM-Stroke (GWTG-Stroke) Gold Performance Achievement Award. The award recognizes the Stroke Program's commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care by ensuring that stroke patients receive treatment for at least 24 months according to nationally accepted standards and recommendations.

"With a stroke, time lost is brain lost. As health care providers, we strive to meet the highest standards and mobilize treatments as fast as possible for each stroke patient. The GWTG-Stroke Gold Performance Achievement Award is validation that we are meeting these high standards," said Shyam Prabhakaran, MD, MS. The Stroke Program has developed a comprehensive system for rapid diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients admitted to the emergency department. This includes always being equipped to provide brain imaging scans, having neurologists available to conduct patient evaluations and using clot-busting medications when appropriate.

To receive the GWTG-Stroke Gold Performance Achievement Award, the Stroke Program demonstrated 85% adherence in the GWTG-Stroke key measures for 24 or more consecutive months. These include aggressive use of medications like tPA, antithrombotics, anticoagulation therapy, DVT prophylaxis, cholesterol-reducing drugs, and smoking cessation.

"The American Stroke Association commends the Stroke Program at Rush for its success in implementing standards of care and protocols," said Lee H. Schwamm, M.D., national Get With The Guidelines Steering Committee Member and director of the acute stroke services at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. "The full implementation of acute care and secondary prevention recommendations and guidelines is a critical step in saving the lives and improving outcomes of stroke patients."

GWTG-Stroke uses the "teachable moment," the time soon after a patient has had a stroke, when they are most likely to listen to and follow their healthcare professionals' guidance. Studies demonstrate that patients who are taught how to manage their risk factors while still in the

hospital reduce their risk of a second heart attack or stroke. Through GWTG–Stroke, customized patient education materials are made available at the point of discharge, based on patients’ individual risk profiles. The take-away materials are written in an easy-to-understand format and are available in English and Spanish. In addition, the GWTG Patient Management Tool provides access to up-to-date cardiovascular and stroke science at the point of care.

“The time is right for Rush to be focused on improving the quality of stroke care by implementing GWTG–Stroke. The number of acute ischemic stroke patients eligible for treatment is expected to grow over the next decade due to increasing stroke incidence and a large aging population,” said Laura Vaught, RN.

According to the American Stroke Association, each year approximately 700,000 people suffer a stroke — 500,000 are first attacks and 200,000 are recurrent. Of stroke survivors, 21 percent of men and 24 percent of women die within a year, and for those aged 65 and older, the percentage is even higher.