

TMC Unveils New Stroke Technology Center

By Eliot Duke – Staff Writer – Thomasville Times – August 24, 2010

Whenever a person suffers a stroke, every second is precious to doctors and emergency personnel as nearly two million nerve cells in the brain die each minute.

A new program at Thomasville Medical Center's Stroke Center is giving neurologists quicker access to patients any time, day or night, in an effort to save those vital minutes that can make all the difference in the world when it comes to recovery.

TMC's Stroke Center, a nationally accredited facility since 2006, launched its new teleneurology program, enabling medical staff to connect almost instantly with neurologists using videoconferencing technology at the patient's bedside in the emergency department.

"We are proud to continue to offer our patients the best possible emergency neurologic care," Dr. Keith Miller, medical director of the TMC Stroke Center, said. "This teleneurology service adds to the clinical strength of our stroke center and will help us to even better serve our stroke patients as well as our local community."

TMC will be linked to Specialists On Call (SOC), a joint commission, accredited organization of board-certified, specially trained community and university neurologists who have a minimum of 10 years in clinical practice. Whenever a potential stroke victim enters TMC's emergency department, staff will be connected to an on-call expert neurologist through a mobile videoconferencing link that can be brought to the patient's bedside. The neurologist can then view and discuss diagnostic test results, including CT scans. The program also allows local physicians and family members to have real-time discussions with the expert regarding diagnostic results, patient response and course of treatment.

"This allows patients to have even quicker access to a neurologist if the doctor is on call and can't be there immediately," said Jane Wilder, TMC's public relations director. "We have an awesome group of neurologists on staff and this helps to decrease the time. Before, patients would have to wait for the neurologists to arrive where now they can go ahead and access that doctor."

A big advantage in having an experienced critical stroke care neurologist immediately available is being able to determine if the clot-bursting drug tPA should be part of the treatment. The drug must be administered within three hours from the onset of first stroke symptoms.

For more information on TMC's Stroke Center call 472-2000.