

St. Francis receives American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines Silver Performance Achievement Award

Trenton, NJ –St. Francis Medical Center has received the American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines SM –Stroke(GWTG–Stroke) Silver Performance Achievement Award. The award recognizes **St. Francis's** commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care by ensuring that stroke patients receive treatment according to nationally accepted standards and recommendations.

"With a stroke, time lost is brain lost, and the GWTG–Stroke Silver Performance Achievement Award addresses the important element of time," said Jerry Jablonowski, **president and CEO**. St. Francis 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 Silver Performance Achievement Award, **St. Francis** consistently complied for at least one year with the requirements in the GWTG–Stroke program. These include aggressive use of medications like tPA, antithrombotics, anticoagulation therapy, DVT prophylaxis, cholesterol reducing drugs, and smoking cessation. This twelve-month evaluation period is the second in an ongoing self-evaluation by the hospital to continually reach the 85 percent compliance level needed to sustain this award.

"The American Stroke Association commends **St. Francis** 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 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 **St. Francis** 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 **Barbara Simonds, RN, BSN, director of the Stroke Program**.

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.

**ST. FRANCIS MEDICAL CENTER
BESTOWS SPIRIT OF ST. FRANCIS AWARD**