OVERLOOK HOSPITAL IS DESIGNATED NEW JERSEY’S FIRST COMPREHENSIVE STROKE CENTER BY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Thursday, May 31, 2007, Summit, NJ - The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services has designated Overlook Hospital as a Comprehensive Stroke Center, recognition of the hospital’s leadership role in quickly and effectively treating stroke patients, while achieving the most positive possible outcome.

Overlook is the first hospital in New Jersey to receive this title.

“By creating stroke teams with physicians, nurses, and other hospital staff drawn from the Emergency Department, the Radiology Department and the Atlantic Neuroscience Institute, we developed a stroke center that functions like a trauma center, says Shalini Bansil, MD, medical director of the Stroke Center at Overlook Hospital’s Atlantic Neuroscience Institute. “Few truly state-of-the art stroke centers exist in the United States today and we are proud to count Overlook among that number. We have been working toward this achievement since 2005.”

Comprehensive Stroke Center (CSC) designation gives Overlook Hospital regional stroke center status, meaning stroke emergencies are transferred to Overlook for higher level stroke care from a surrounding network of medical centers. CSC designation requires Overlook’s clinical staff to teach other hospitals how to provide primary stroke care.

Overlook’s Comprehensive Stroke Center provides a stroke intervention rate that is twice as high as the national average in addition to a dedicated stroke unit, which translates into better patient outcomes and faster recovery.

“The State’s recognition for providing a more comprehensive level of stroke care sets Overlook apart from other neuroscience centers,” says Alan Lieber, chief operating officer at Overlook Hospital.

In 2006, Overlook treated approximately 500 patients with strokes and the numbers are increasing rapidly as Overlook is recognized in surrounding communities as a leader in stroke care. In the first quarter of 2007, Overlook received 161 stroke patients versus 119 patients during the same period in 2006. Overlook Hospital’s stroke intervention rate is greater than 12 percent, while the national average is less than five percent.

“Overlook’s depth and range of medical services and expertise, along with our proven track record of excellence in the neurosciences and a strong commitment to stroke care, has made Overlook the State’s leader in stroke response and treatment,” said Lieber.

Overlook Hospital instituted a Code Grey for rapid stroke response -- the stroke equivalent of the rapid response protocols used for cardiac and trauma emergencies. Stroke demands rapid-fire, yet carefully calibrated decisions because the window for clearing the clogged arteries responsible for stroke is a mere three hours. After that, doctors can no longer administer the only drug effective for halting stroke’s damage: a clot-buster called tPA. Many people with suspected stroke arrive at the Emergency Department with just enough time for a medical team to diagnose and treat them. Time is not only essential—it is vital.

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“Diagnosing and treating stroke is a sprint to the finish line,” says Ron Benitez, MD, director of interventional neurosurgery at the Atlantic Neuroscience Institute. “Fortunately, Overlook is quite unique in that we can also offer some patients a minimally invasive technology, called the MERCI® Retriever, to remove clots in the brain. The capabilities of the MERCI Retriever increases the treatment window to eight hours.”

Key to a fast stroke response is early communication with first responders, such as EMT’s and paramedics. Atlantic Ambulance provides a seamless emergency transport system, including helicopter transport of stroke patients to Overlook Hospital in Summit.

“The combination of dedicated stroke emergency transport and stroke teams, a Code Grey protocol, innovative treatment technologies and an inpatient stroke unit, enables Overlook’s Stroke Center professionals to not only saves lives, but also preserve the quality of life for stroke victims,” says Dr. Bansil.

**Stroke Facts**

Stroke is the number one leading cause of disability and is the third leading cause of death worldwide. It is estimated that there are 750,000 strokes in the United States of America each year, of which 85 percent are ischemic. An ischemic stroke occurs when a blood vessel in the brain is blocked by a blood clot, which can impair brain function and cause severe disability or death.

**About the Stroke Center at Overlook Hospital**

Located in Summit, New Jersey, the Comprehensive Stroke Center at Overlook Hospital, part of Atlantic Health and the Atlantic Neuroscience Institute (www.atlantichealth.org), offers the most advanced technology available anywhere in New Jersey. Some of the groundbreaking technology now in use at Overlook includes: the Siemens Neurostar – the only dedicated biplane neuro-angiography suite in the area. The Neurostar provides images of the brain from multiple angles at the same time to help physicians quickly identify and clear blocked arteries. Another technology is the Merci® Retrieval System which can remove potentially deadly blood clots through a tiny incision. Overlook has treated the most stroke patients in New Jersey using this technology and is one of the most experienced centers in the United States using this technology.

Other methods to treat stroke include intra-arterial thrombolysis, minimally invasive aneurysm treatment, intracranial angioplasty and stenting, carotid angioplasty and stenting, and a multidisciplinary approach to the treatment of arteriovenous malformations.

Overlook Hospital’s Community Health Department offers free stroke screenings in surrounding communities. For more information, call 908-522-5355.

In addition to Comprehensive Stroke Center designation by the State of New Jersey, the Stroke Center at Overlook Hospital has earned the Gold Seal of Approval™ for stroke care by The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and has been certified as a Primary Stroke Center.

Atlantic Health is the primary academic and clinical affiliate in New Jersey of Mount Sinai School of Medicine and The Mount Sinai Hospital.

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