

Winter Haven Hospital receives American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines Gold Performance Achievement Award

The American Stroke Association recently awarded Winter Haven Hospital its Get With The GuidelinesSM-Stroke (GWTG-Stroke) Gold Performance Achievement Award at the association's International Stroke Conference 2009. The award recognizes Winter Haven Hospital's commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care by ensuring that stroke patients receive treatment according to evidence-based guidelines.

"In treating stroke, time to treatment is a key factor in predicting patient outcomes," said Andrea Sekura, CMSRN. "Receiving the Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Gold Performance Achievement Award shows that Winter Haven Hospital is continuing to treat its stroke patients quickly and effectively."

Through GWTG-Stroke, Winter Haven Hospital is tracking comprehensive efforts to rapidly diagnose and treat of stroke patients admitted to the emergency department. This includes 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, Winter Haven Hospital consistently complied for at least 24 months 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 24 month evaluation period reflects an ongoing effort of the hospital to continually maintain 85 percent compliance required for an award.

"The American Stroke Association recognizes Winter Haven Hospital for successfully implementing proven standards of care for stroke treatment," said Lee H. Schwamm, M.D., vice chair of the Get With The Guidelines steering committee and vice chairman of the neurology department at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. "By meeting Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Gold Performance Achievement Award criteria, Winter Haven Hospital demonstrates its active, ongoing effort to improve the outcomes of the stroke patients it serves and save more lives."

The GWTG Patient Management Tool provides access to up-to-date cardiovascular and stroke science at the point of care.

"Articles published in leading scientific journals have increasingly documented the effectiveness of Get With The Guidelines-Stroke. The time is right for Winter Haven Hospital to continue its focus on providing high quality, science-based stroke care. 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 Andrea Sekura, CMSRN.

GWTG is a comprehensive program that provides an online interactive assessment and report tool, resources, quarterly workshops, training and feedback to staff at participating hospitals. The goal is to improve implementation of evidence-based interventions that are proven to reduce complications after stroke and the chances of a subsequent stroke or heart attack.

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States. According to the American Stroke Association, approximately 795,000 people each year experience a new or recurrent stroke.

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About GWTG:

Get With The GuidelinesSM (GWTG) is the American Heart Association/ American Stroke Association's hospital-based quality improvement program that empowers healthcare teams to save lives and reduce healthcare costs by helping hospitals follow evidence-based guidelines and recommendations.

Visit americanheart.org/getwiththeguidelines for more information.