

Baptist Health Awarded Telestroke Grant Through the Alabama Department of Public Health

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Tuesday, November 22nd, 2011, 10:20am

Baptist Health was recently awarded a \$45,000 grant through the Alabama Department of Public Health's Cardiovascular Health Unit. The telestroke pilot project will establish a Telestroke Network in the state of Alabama with the primary objective of optimizing stroke care for our citizens. Baptist Medical Center South will serve as the "hub" in the telestroke network, while Prattville Baptist Hospital will serve as the first "spoke." Once implemented, additional "spokes" will be added throughout rural areas of Central Alabama.

Grant funding will be used to purchase equipment to provide high resolution teleconferencing capabilities. Intensivists (doctors specializing in intensive care), neurologists at Baptist Medical Center South and Specialists on Call will be available through the telestroke network to assist Prattville Baptist Hospital staff with both diagnosis and consultation, thereby reducing overall diagnosis time and unnecessary transit for critical needs patients with stroke symptoms.

Dr. Stephen Suggs, Baptist Health medical director of Neuro Hospitalist Services; Robin Barca, Baptist Health COO, CEO of Baptist South; and Ginger Henry, CEO of Prattville Baptist Hospital, will lead the project team through implementation of this initiative. Collaborating partners include the Alabama Department of Public Health, Baptist Health, Specialists on Call and the University of Alabama Health Center Montgomery's Internal Medicine Residency Program.

Stroke is the leading cause of disability and one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Alabama has one of the worst stroke mortality rates in the nation, with approximately 5.8 percent of all deaths attributed to stroke. Since time is paramount when treating an acute stroke patient, telemedicine delivery of neurologic care for stroke enhances medical treatment and improves overall patient outcomes. This telestroke pilot project has the potential to dramatically impact the quality of care given to stroke patients in Central Alabama.

Source: Baptist Health

