

RWJ Patients Now Have Access to Neurologists 24/7

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RAHWAY – Residents suffering from a stroke or other neurological emergencies now have 24/7 access to board-certified, fellowship trained neurologists thanks to a partnership between Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Rahway and the telemedicine company Specialists on Call (SOC).

“During a stroke, every second counts,” said Michael Bernstein, MD, MBA, chairman of the hospital’s Emergency Department. “Receiving prompt diagnosis and treatment can mean the difference between recovery and permanent brain damage, or even death.”

Stroke is the leading cause of serious, long-term disability and the third leading cause of death in the United States. Thanks to this teleneurology service, RWJ patients now have immediate, around the clock access to neurological specialists.

“We can now provide patients immediate access to emergency neurologists, ensuring prompt diagnosis and treatment for our patients. This will have a big impact on patients’ recovery and their quality of life,” said Kirk Tice, President and CEO of RWJ Rahway.

If an Emergency Department physician suspects a stroke, for example, the physician would order a CT scan, which is digitally sent to the SOC neurologist. A special audiovisual communication system is brought to the bedside where Emergency Department staff has access to a Specialist On Call neurologist.

The neurologist facilitates a patient exam, views the CT scan, and consults with the ED physicians, patients, and family members. The neurologist, along with the ED physician, then can assess whether the patient is a candidate for the clot-dissolving drug tPA, which can help halt or even reverse the damage caused by an ischemic stroke if administered within three hours of symptoms. Ischemic stroke is the most common type of stroke.

Specialists On Call is the nation’s leader in emergency neurology services. Operating in more than seven states, it is the first private telemedicine company to earn The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval and maintains an active quality assurance program with regularly scheduled peer review conferences.

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital is part of the Robert Wood Johnson Health System whose hospitals include Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton and Children’s Specialized Hospital.