



The Ohio Department of Health reports that stroke is the 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States as well as the state of Ohio. Early effective stroke care can make a big difference in long term outcomes during a stroke. During a typical stroke, the brain loses two million neurons or brain cells per minute without proper oxygen supply.

Primary Stroke Center Certification of an acute care hospital assures the public that the certified center adheres to best practices known to improve the outcomes. Union Hospital is certified as a Primary Stroke Center through our hospital accreditation body, Det Norske Veritas - **Germanischer Lloyd** (DNV - GL).

Standards for Primary Stroke Center designation expect a certified hospital has implemented best practice guidelines and systems of care that connect the links in The American Heart Association's Stroke Chain of Survival. These interventions decrease risk of death and disability due to stroke. The 8 D's (links) in the chain of survival are:

- Detection or early recognition of symptoms
- Dispatch of the EMS
- Delivery to the most appropriate stroke care center
- Door or immediate triage in the ED
- Data – prompt ED evaluation, labs and CT
- Decision on form of treatment
- Drug – delivery of thrombolytic medication when appropriate
- Disposition to a stroke unit, ICU or transfer to a higher level of care.

Primary Stroke Center Certification expects the certified center to be in a state of continuous improvement in stroke care measures. Community education, the use of standardized order sets, care pathways, submission of data to a stroke registry, collaboration with the EMS and improving knowledge are all part of our continual improvement of stroke care at Union Hospital. Regular measurement and communication of performance is essential to continual improvement.

The Union Hospital Telestroke network relationship with Cleveland Clinic is another opportunity for reporting and benchmarking. Each time a telestroke consult is done, measures are reported. Because time is brain tissue in the early phases of a stroke, these measures are specific to time elements in the ED. The Cleveland Clinic collects these measures from all of the hospitals in their stroke care network to allow those hospitals to benchmark against one another.

Recognition of early stroke symptoms is the first link in the chain of survival. If you or someone you know experiences any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately:

- Sudden **numbness** or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden **confusion**, trouble speaking, or difficulty understanding speech.
- Sudden **trouble seeing** in one or both eyes.
- Sudden **trouble walking**, dizziness, loss of balance, or lack of coordination.
- Sudden **severe headache** with no known cause

If you believe someone is having a stroke there is a simple test called the F.A.C.E. test.

**F—Face:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

**A—Arms:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

**S—Speech:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?

**T—Time:** If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Stroke treatment is most effective in the first 3 hours. It is critical to act FAST!