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Rita Hess, Chief Nursing Officer for NSMC, Manny Linares, CEO of NSMC, Ann Mroz of the American Heart Association, Isis Zambrana-Diaz, Director of Clinical Quality Improvement at NSMC, Arlene Cameron, Stroke Coordinator at NSMC

MIAMI - North Shore Medical Center has received the American Heart Association/ American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke Bronze Quality Achievement Award. The award recognizes North Shore Medical Center's commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care by ensuring that stroke patients receive treatment according to nationally accepted standards and recommendations.

"With a stroke, time lost is brain lost, and the Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Bronze Quality Achievement Award addresses the important element of time," said Manny Linares, chief executive officer, North Shore Medical Center. North Shore Medical Center has developed a comprehensive system for rapid diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients admitted to the emergency department. This includes always being equipped to provide brain imaging scans, having neurologists available to conduct patient evaluations and using clot-busting medications when appropriate.

To receive the Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Bronze Quality Achievement Award, North Shore Medical Center consistently followed the treatment guidelines in the Get With The Guidelines-Stroke program for 90 days. These include aggressive use of medications like tPA, antithrombotics, anticoagulation therapy, DVT prophylaxis, cholesterol reducing drugs, and smoking cessation. The 90-day evaluation period is the first in an ongoing self-evaluation by the hospital to continually reach the 85 percent compliance level needed to sustain this award.

“We commend North Shore Medical Center for its success in implementing standards of care and protocols,” said Lee H. Schwamm, M.D., chair of the national Get With the Guidelines Steering Committee and director of the TeleStroke and Acute Stroke Services at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. “The full implementation of acute care and secondary prevention recommendations and guidelines is a critical step in saving the lives and improving outcomes of stroke patients.”

Get With The Guidelines–Stroke uses the “teachable moment,” the time soon after a patient has had a stroke, when they are most likely to listen to and follow their healthcare professionals’ guidance. Studies demonstrate that patients who are taught how to manage their risk factors while still in the hospital reduce their risk of a second stroke. Through Get With The Guidelines–Stroke, customized patient education materials are made available at the point of discharge, based on patients’ individual risk profiles. The take-away materials are written in an easy-to-understand format and are available in English and Spanish. In addition, the Get With The Guidelines Patient Management Tool provides access to up-to-date cardiovascular and stroke science at the point of care.

“The time is right for North Shore Medical Center to be focused on improving the quality of stroke care by implementing Get With The Guidelines–Stroke. 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 Linares.

According to the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, stroke is one of the leading causes of death and serious, long-term disability in the United States. On average, someone suffers a stroke every 40 seconds; someone dies of a stroke every four minutes; and 795,000 people suffer a new or recurrent stroke each year.

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