



A DIVISION OF
HEALTH CARE SERVICES
AGENCY

San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency



<http://www.sjgov.org/ems>

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New System of Care for Stroke Victims Initiated by San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services *County-wide stroke centers unveiled during Stroke Awareness Month*

Today, the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency announced the creation of specialty stroke system of care designed to ensure that patients experiencing signs and symptoms of an acute stroke are provided with rapid access to evaluation and treatment at primary stroke centers located throughout San Joaquin County. This announcement comes as part of the County Board of Supervisors resolution recognizing May 2018 as Stroke Awareness Month.

Adventist Lodi Memorial, Doctors Hospital Manteca, Kaiser Hospital Manteca, San Joaquin General Hospital, St. Joseph's Medical Center, Sutter Tracy Community Hospital applied for and recently received designation as primary stroke centers following a ten month implementation process. By designing an inclusive stroke system and involving as many eligible hospitals as possible, the EMS Agency is ensuring that patients have rapid access to specialized stroke services.

"The formation of this specialized system improves the delivery and quality of care for stroke patients," said San Joaquin County EMS Medical Director Richard N. Buys M.D. "Paramedics are trained to identify and assess acute stroke signs and symptoms, and to provide early notification to the primary stroke center thereby greatly increasing the likelihood of a more rapid and effective course of treatment. Additionally, designated hospitals have specialized equipment, training and protocols to effectively treat stroke patients."

To receive the designation as a primary stroke center by the San Joaquin County EMS Agency, participating hospitals had to achieve accreditation as a primary stroke center by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and demonstrate proficiency in the management of acute stroke patients during a thorough EMS Agency site survey. In order to receive designation by the EMS Agency, a Primary Stroke Center must also provide:

- Specialized equipment specific to stroke emergencies;
- A medical director with sufficient knowledge of cerebrovascular disease;
- A program manager (registered nurse with stroke program experience);
- Teleneurology consultation services;
- A clinical stroke team that responds to every stroke alert; and
- Written protocol, continuing stroke education for staff, quality improvement and patient transfer arrangements with stroke centers that provide higher level of care.

The San Joaquin County EMS Agency will monitor the speed and effectiveness of the stroke system using established national benchmarks by the Centers for Disease Control, American Heart Association, and other organizations. As part of the commitment to continual improvement, the EMS Agency will coordinate quarterly with primary stroke center staff to review data and share best practices.

Stroke Facts (Source: CDC)

- Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States, killing about **140,000 Americans** each year—that's **1 of every 20 deaths**.
- A stroke, sometimes called a 'brain attack', occurs when a blood clot blocks the blood supply to the brain or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts.
- Someone in the United States has a stroke every **40 seconds**. Every **four minutes**, someone dies of stroke.
- Every year, about **795,000 people** in the United States have a stroke. About 610,000 of these are first or new strokes; 185,000 are recurrent strokes.
- Stroke is an important cause of disability. Stroke reduces mobility in more than half of stroke survivors age 65 and over.
- Stroke costs the nation **\$34 billion** annually, including the cost of health care services, medications, and lost productivity.
- Some medical conditions—including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes, overweight or obesity, and previous stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA)—can also raise your stroke risk.
- While you cannot control some stroke risk factors, like heredity, age, gender, and ethnicity, avoiding smoking and drinking too much alcohol, eating a balanced diet, and getting exercise are all choices you can make to reduce your risk.

Common Stroke Warning Signs and Symptoms

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

For more facts regarding stroke please visit:

Center for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/facts.htm>

National Stroke Association: www.Stroke.org or the National Stroke Awareness site for more on ways to raise stroke awareness: <http://www.stroke.org/stroke-resources/raise-awareness-stroke/national-stroke-awareness-month>.

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