

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Joanne Nicholas  
212 523-4044  
jnicholas2@chpnet.org**

**IN REVERSAL OF A PATTERN, ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL'S SURGEONS  
BRING THE DOCTOR TO STROKE PATIENTS AT ST. LUKE'S ER**

**Continuum's Three NYS Designated Stroke Centers Share a Traveling Emergency  
Neuro-Endovascular Surgical Team**

New York, N.Y. April 25, 2011 - Time is the enemy for the victim of a "brain attack" - better known as a stroke - because most brain damage occurs within the first few hours. Stroke patients brought to St. Luke's Hospital Emergency Department have recently been given the gift of extra time now that a team of neuro-endovascular surgeons based at Roosevelt Hospital come to treat these patients rather than bring the patients to Roosevelt. The team had already been going to Beth Israel Medical Center's ER.

After a patient has been diagnosed with stroke and evaluated as a candidate for intervention, a neurologist pages the emergency neuro-endovascular surgical team (E-stroke team) at Roosevelt. In about ten minutes, the team arrives at St. Luke's ER at Amsterdam Avenue and W. 113<sup>th</sup> Street rather than transport the patient forty blocks for this specialized procedure - a process that could take about two hours.

The E-stroke team is the only one of its kind in New York City. It consists of highly trained super specialists - a neuro-endovascular surgeon, a neuro-endovascular surgical

fellow, and a special procedures neuro-radiology technologist. They are supplemented in the endovascular suite by the skilled interventional radiology nurses and staff at St. Luke's, Roosevelt, or at Beth Israel Medical Center. This innovative approach was first started in July 2009 with the team traveling to Beth Israel's ER at First Avenue and 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Since that time, they have treated over 70 patients with impressive results. The addition of St. Luke's to this rapid response program gives every stroke patient at a Continuum hospital access to this life-saving therapy.

“Our endovascular neurosurgeons are on the new frontier of stroke management because of remarkable advances in treating the most common type of stroke, ischemic stroke using minimally invasive microsurgery,” said Alejandro Berenstein, M.D., director of the Hyman Newman Institute for Neurology and Neurosurgery at Roosevelt Hospital. “Our priority has been to make this treatment available to all appropriate stroke patients at each of our emergency departments, but the reality is that super-specialized endovascular surgeons can not be at every hospital. To address this need, we devised the rapid response portable E-stroke team of Roosevelt Hospital specialists that travel to the patient. We hope it will become a model for hospitals in New York City and the rest of the country.”

Stroke ranks as the third leading cause of death in the United States. According to the American Heart Association's most recent statistics, over 795,000 people suffer a stroke each year and 146,600 people die from stroke related causes. But perhaps its greatest toll

is on those who suffer from the loss of function resulting from permanent death of brain tissue. Stroke is the most common cause of adult disability.

“All three Emergency Departments of Continuum Health Partners’ Manhattan medical centers are New York State Department of Health designated stroke centers and received the silver Performance Achievement Award from the American Heart Association / American Stroke Association last year,” said Dan E. Wiener, M.D., chairman of Emergency Medicine for St. Luke’s and Roosevelt Hospitals.

“Anyone with stroke symptoms who comes to one of our Emergency Departments receives priority triage in case they are having a ‘brain attack’. Each patient is evaluated by a board certified neurologist to confirm the diagnosis, the type of stroke, and determine if they are an appropriate candidate to receive a clot-busting drug to enhance their chances for recovery. If that drug isn’t appropriate but the clot can be surgically removed, our patients with ischemic stroke now have a surgical option with the E-stroke team that gives them a second chance at a good outcome,” said Dr. Wiener.

In addition to the benefit of having the E-stroke team, Continuum ER patients have had an additional advantage. The endovascular neurosurgeons in the team are invited to participate in national and international clinical trials of state-of -the art surgical devices that improve treatment for acute ischemic stroke.

“We were the only hospital in New York City and one of just eighteen in the country to participate in the SWIFT trial comparing the newest techniques to restore blood flow to the brain. It ended early due to positive results and is scheduled to be reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration for approval,” explained Johanna Fifi, M.D., co-investigator of the trial at Roosevelt Hospital and a member of the E-stroke team. “We are also the only center in the New York metropolitan area and one of fewer than 25 sites nationwide enrolling patients in the VISSIT clinical trial. This international trial compares the use of a balloon expandable stent to the current best medical practice for patients with symptomatic narrowing of blood vessels in the head.”

St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Hospitals and Beth Israel Medical Center have made stroke treatment a priority because it is a medical emergency. Please call 911 if you or someone you know is having any of these signs: sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg - often on one side of the body; trouble speaking, seeing, or walking; confusion, dizziness, loss of balance or headache. And ask to have them taken to a designated stroke center.

# # #