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**West Jefferson Center Receives
Get With The Guidelines
Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award**
Award demonstrates West Jefferson's commitment to quality care for stroke patients

(MARRERO, LA – NOVEMBER 11, 2013) – West Jefferson Medical Center (WJMC) has received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines® -Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award. The award recognizes WJMC's commitment and success in implementing excellent care for stroke patients, according to evidence-based guidelines.

To receive the award, West Jefferson achieved an 85 percent or higher adherence to all Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Quality Achievement indicators for two or more consecutive 12-month intervals and achieved 75 percent or higher compliance with six of 10 Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Quality Measures, which are reporting initiatives to measure quality of care.

These measures include aggressive use of medications, such as antithrombotics, anticoagulation therapy, deep vein thrombosis prophylaxis, cholesterol reducing drugs and smoking cessation, all aimed at reducing death and disability and improving the lives of stroke patients.

In addition to the Get With The Guideline-Stroke award, WJMC has also been recognized as a recipient of the association's Target: Stroke Honor Roll, for improving stroke care. Over the past quarter, at least 50 percent of the hospital's eligible ischemic stroke patients have received tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, within 60 minutes of arriving at the hospital (known as 'door-to-needle' time). A thrombolytic, or clot-busting agent, tPA is the only drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the urgent treatment of ischemic stroke. If given intravenously in the first three hours after the start of stroke symptoms, tPA has been shown to significantly reverse the effects of stroke and reduce permanent disability.

“With a stroke, time lost is brain lost, and the Get With The Guidelines–Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award demonstrates West Jefferson’s commitment to being one of the top hospitals in the country for providing aggressive, proven stroke care,” said Dr. Michael Puente, Medical Director of the West Jefferson Medical Center Stroke Unit.

“We will continue with our focus on providing care that has been shown in the scientific literature to quickly and efficiently treat stroke patients with evidence-based protocols.”

“West Jefferson Medical Center is to be commended for its commitment to implementing standards of care and protocols for treating stroke patients,” said Lee H. Schwamm, M.D., chair of the Get With The Guidelines National 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 heart attack or 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 gives healthcare providers access to up-to-date cardiovascular and stroke science at the point of care.

“West Jefferson is continually striving to 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 Dr. Puente.

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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About Get With The Guidelines

Get With The Guidelines® is the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s hospital-based quality improvement program that empowers healthcare teams to save lives and reduce healthcare costs by helping hospitals follow evidence-based guidelines and recommendations. For more information, visit heart.org/quality.