

West Jefferson Honored with Quality Achievement Award for Stroke Care

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(MARRERO, LA – NOVEMBER 5, 2014) – **West Jefferson Medical Center (WJMC)** has received the *Get With The Guidelines*®-Stroke Gold-Plus Quality Achievement Award for implementing specific quality improvement measures outlined by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association for the treatment of stroke patients.

Get With The Guidelines Stroke helps hospital teams provide the most up-to-date, research-based guidelines with the goal of speeding recovery and reducing death and disability for stroke patients. West Jefferson earned the award by meeting specific quality achievement measures for the diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients at a set level for a designated period. These measures include aggressive use of medications and risk-reduction therapies aimed at reducing death and disability and improving the lives of stroke patients.

West Jefferson Medical Center also received the association's **Target: Stroke Honor Roll** for meeting stroke quality measures that reduce the time between hospital arrival and treatment with the clot-buster tPA, the only drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat ischemic stroke. People who suffer a stroke who receive the drug within three hours of the onset of symptoms may recover quicker and are less likely to suffer severe disability.

"West Jefferson is dedicated to improving the quality of stroke care and The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's *Get With The Guidelines*–Stroke helps us achieve that goal," said **Anthony Digerolamo, Chief Nursing Officer for West Jefferson Medical Center**. "With this award, our hospital demonstrates our commitment to ensure that our patients receive care based on internationally-respected clinical guidelines."

"We are pleased to recognize West Jefferson Medical center for their commitment and dedication to stroke care," said Deepak L. Bhatt, M.D., M.P.H., national chairman of the *Get With The Guidelines* steering committee and Executive Director of Interventional Cardiovascular Programs at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. "Studies have shown that hospitals that consistently follow *Get With The Guidelines* quality improvement measures can reduce patients' length of stays and 30-day readmission rates and reduce disparity gaps in care."

Get With The Guidelines–Stroke also helps West Jefferson's staff implement prevention measures, which include educating stroke patients to manage their risk factors and to be aware of warning signs for stroke, and ensuring they take their medications properly. Hospitals can make customized patient education materials available upon discharge, based on the patients' individual risk profiles. The take-away materials are written in an easy-to-understand format in either English or Spanish.

According to the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, stroke is the number four cause of death and a leading cause of adult 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.