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TELEMEDICINE IMPROVES STROKE CARE AT EASTLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

When a person suffers a stroke, seconds count in preventing brain loss. More than 31,000 brain cells die every second when a person is having a stroke.

Eastland Memorial Hospital has recently accelerated its stroke treatment and diagnosis through telemedicine.

Beginning October 6th, a stroke-trained neurologist now sees patients with stroke symptoms at Eastland Memorial within minutes of arrival. Advanced telemedicine technology wirelessly links patients to a neurologist through an onsite robotic assistant.

Texas Stroke Institute (TSI) and Dallas-based Questcare Telehealth have joined forces with this hospital to provide the specialized physicians for the telemedicine



consultations. Quickly following a patient's arrival at the emergency department with stroke symptoms, a vascular neurologist (stroke specialist) at a remote site connects via the Internet to the on-site robot.

"A special clot-dissolving drug called *Activase* or tPA must be administered as quickly as possible to effectively treat the most common type of stroke, which is an ischemic stroke (blockage type stroke)." says Dr. William Simpson, who is medical director of the emergency department at Eastland Memorial Hospital.

"Questcare Telehealth's neurology team works closely with on-site physicians and the Texas Stroke Institute to diagnose and treat stroke quickly," said Matthew Bush, MD, President of Questcare Telehealth. "Once our team administers tPA, the patient has additional time to be evaluated and potentially transferred (if needed) to one of Texas Stroke Institute's comprehensive sites for advanced imaging and possible endovascular treatment."



Chris Fanale, MD, Medical Director of Questcare Telehealth's Neurology Program, sees excitement among emergency department physicians and nurses as they continue to collaborate with TSI and Questcare on treatment plans, continue stroke education, and work to shorten the number of minutes they take to administer tPA. "This program is a way for us to ensure that our community and the area we serve have access to the care they need and that they deserve" says Gena McCormick, Eastland Memorial Hospital's Chief Nursing Officer.



"We work closely with the emergency department director and stroke coordinator at each facility, with the goal of delivering the highest quality acute neurological care," Dr. Fanale says. The vascular neurologists providing the stroke consultations at Eastland Memorial hold a current Texas medical license and have been verified through the same credentialing process as any other member of the hospital's medical staff. "These physicians are highly educated and specialized. They are the best of the best" says Ms. McCormick.

As a result of this initiative, Dr. Fanale said, "more patients will receive life saving treatment at their local hospitals. With telemedicine, the possibilities are becoming limitless."