



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sacred Heart Named a Comprehensive Stroke Center

PENSACOLA, Fla. (April 4, 2018) -- The Stroke Center at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola has been designated by the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration as a Comprehensive Stroke Center.

The designation is reserved for Stroke Centers with the highest level of capabilities and clinical expertise in a number of disciplines. There are 42 Comprehensive Stroke Centers in Florida with Tallahassee being the closest one to Pensacola. Sacred Heart is the only CSC facility in northwest Florida and southern Alabama to have both a board certified critical care neurologist and endovascular neurosurgeon on staff."

Sacred Heart is part of Ascension, the nation's largest, nonprofit health system.

A stroke occurs when one of the blood vessels that carry oxygen to the brain either becomes clogged or bursts. A Comprehensive Stroke Center must have capabilities that include:

- An acute stroke team available 24 hours per day, seven days per week, including: Emergency Department physicians, nurses, neurologists, and radiologists.
- Neurologists and neurosurgeons must be available 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and in-house within two hours. The attending neurosurgeons should have expertise in cerebrovascular surgery.
- Endovascular specialists trained in interventional procedures to treat strokes caused by narrowed or blocked in arteries in the neck and head, or brain aneurysms, should be on active full-time staff. Sacred Heart provides the area's only endovascular neurosurgeon, Dr. Maria Toledo.
- Physicians with specialized expertise in critical care for patients with severe and/or complex neurological/neurosurgical conditions;
- Emergency department physician and nurses trained in the care of stroke patients;

- Nursing staff in intensive care unit (ICU) with specialized training in care of patients with complex or severe neurological conditions.
- A multidisciplinary team of health care professionals with expertise or experience in stroke, representing clinical or neuropsychology, nutrition services, a doctor of pharmacy with stroke expertise, case management and social workers.
- Capabilities for inpatient stroke rehabilitation and continued care following a stroke.

“Sacred Heart’s achievement of the state’s designation as a Comprehensive Stroke Center is the result of years of work,” said Dr. Terry Neill, a critical care neurologist and medical director of the Stroke Center. “The hospital invested in the latest biplane imaging technology for stroke care, and we have built a team of specialists with advanced training to quickly diagnose and treat strokes. This will now allow patients with these potentially debilitating conditions to be treated locally rather than having to travel great distances to academic centers for care.”

These advances in treating strokes are another reason why everyone should seek emergency care immediately when stroke symptoms develop.

“When it comes to stroke, time lost is brain lost,” said Dr. Neill. “Rapid response to stroke allows for the use of clot-busting drugs or interventional procedures that can prevent death or disability.”

The warning signs of stroke include:

- 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.

About Sacred Heart Health System

On the Gulf Coast, Ascension operates Sacred Heart Health System based in Pensacola, Fla. and Providence Hospital and Providence Medical Group based in Mobile, Ala. Together, these Ascension healthcare facilities have served Gulf Coast communities for more than 160 years and they employ more than 6,600 associates. Across the region, Ascension provided more than \$113 million in community benefit and care of persons living in poverty in fiscal year 2016. Ascension is a faith-based healthcare organization committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and

those most vulnerable. Ascension is the largest non-profit health system in the U.S. and the world's largest Catholic health system, operating 2,600 sites of care – including 151 hospitals and more than 50 senior living facilities – in 22 states and the District of Columbia. For more on Sacred Heart Health System, visit www.sacred-heart.org.

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