



## Stroke program to follow in Level One Cardiac Care's footsteps

**(June 2008)** With the Level One Cardiac Care program gaining national acclaim, the Washington State Department of Health has asked Lincoln Hospital, Sacred Heart Medical Center and Northwest MedStar Critical Care Transport to partner up again. This time, to put protocols in place for a stroke program aimed at saving the lives of rural patients.

"Stroke, like heart attack, is all about time," says Ralph Monteagudo, DO. "The faster we get the patient into the ER, diagnosed and transported by helicopter to a major stroke center, the better their chance of a positive outcome."

With stroke, says Dr. Monte, one of the key elements in diagnosis will be to differentiate between the two types of strokes — a blockage in the brain and a brain bleed.

"Although they produce the same effect, these two types of stroke are treated in a completely different manner," says Dr. Monte. "Our challenge here in Davenport will be to make that diagnosis quickly and get the correct intervention started before sending the patient to Sacred Heart on the MedStar helicopter."

This program, once implemented, will be rolled out across the state to all rural hospitals. "The Department of Health is funding this process through a grant and we're glad to be one of the lead agencies on this project. We're looking forward to working with Sacred Heart's Stroke Center to bring the best program to Lincoln County and the entire state of Washington."

According to the American Stroke Association, stroke is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. and the leading cause of adult disability. Because only 25% of stroke patients receive the necessary treatment during the "Golden Hour" in which treatment is most effective, it is clear that the public does not recognize or understand the first signs of stroke or that getting immediate medical attention is imperative.

"Call an ambulance. Drive them to the nearest hospital. Act fast and don't wait," says Dr. Monte, who adds this low number also reflects on the medical establishment. "Most hospitals are not prepared with a clear stroke protocol. Response times are slow. That's why this program is so important."

With the help of Sacred Heart's stroke team, Lincoln Hospital physicians will build these steps and put deadlines in place for how quickly each step should be accomplished.

"The bottom line is that lives will be saved all over the state," says Dr. Monte. "It's good to know we're a part of making that happen."