



PRESS RELEASE

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VALLEY BAPTIST-BROWNSVILLE, VBMC-HARLINGEN 2 OF ONLY 5 HOSPITALS IN TEXAS TO RECEIVE “GOLD PLUS” AWARD FOR STROKE CARE & GOLD AWARD FOR HEART FAILURE TREATMENT

*Valley Baptist Physicians, Nurses Provide Life-Saving Care for
Heart & Stroke Patients, Following National Guidelines;
VBMC-Harlingen to also Receive Award for Treating Heart Attack*

BROWNSVILLE / HARLINGEN - Life-saving care provided by Valley Baptist physicians and employees has made Valley Baptist Medical Center-Brownsville and Valley Baptist Medical Center-Harlingen the only hospitals in the Valley – and two of only five hospitals in the state of Texas – to receive a “Gold Plus” award for care of stroke patients and a “Gold” award for care of heart failure patients from the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association for 2011.

The national awards program, *Get With The Guidelines*, is designed to help ensure that the care hospitals provide for heart failure and stroke is aligned with the latest scientific guidelines.



The American Heart Association and American Stroke Association recognize this hospital for achieving at least two years of 85% or higher adherence to all Get With The Guidelines® program quality indicators to improve quality of patient care and outcomes.

The “Gold” award for care of heart failure patients indicates 85 percent or greater compliance with national guidelines, as set by the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology.

The “Gold Plus” awards for stroke care were received by both Valley Baptist hospitals for meeting guidelines for additional quality measures (such as for education for stroke patients) every month, at least 75% of the time.

In addition, Valley Baptist-Brownsville was one of only seven hospitals in Texas to also achieve “Target Stroke Honor Roll” status for fast response in treating patients who come to the

hospital with life-threatening symptoms of stroke. In fact, Valley Baptist-Brownsville was the first hospital in Texas to receive the “Honor Roll” award for consistently treating stroke patients with life-saving medications within an hour after the patient arrives at the hospital. Also, Valley Baptist-Brownsville was the only hospital in the state to receive both the “Honor Roll” award and a “Gold Plus” award for stroke treatment.



The American Heart Association and American Stroke Association recognize this hospital for achieving 85% or higher adherence to all Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Performance Achievement indicators for consecutive 12 month intervals and 75% or higher compliance with 6 of 10 Get With The Guidelines Stroke Quality Measures to improve quality of patient care and outcomes.

When it comes to stroke, the sooner that treatment begins, the better the patient’s chances of surviving without disabilities. At Valley Baptist-Brownsville and Valley Baptist-Harlingen, a clot-busting medication called tPA is used when medically indicated to reverse strokes – but the medication must be given within 4½ hours from the start of symptoms of a possible stroke.

The accomplishments by Valley Baptist-Brownsville and Valley Baptist-Harlingen physicians and staff were recognized nationally by the American Heart Association in a [recent issue of US News & World Report magazine](#).

A 3rd Award – for Treating Heart Attack Patients

In addition, Valley Baptist-Harlingen has been notified of a third award -- for care of coronary artery disease patients -- from the American College of Cardiology. Valley Baptist-Harlingen will be one of 167 hospitals nation-wide to receive this [“Action Registry – Get With the Guidelines Gold Performance Achievement Award”](#) in Orlando, Florida on Nov. 14. To receive the Gold Performance Achievement Award for coronary artery disease for 2011, Valley Baptist-Harlingen consistently followed the treatment guidelines in ACTION Registry®-GWTG™ for 8 consecutive quarters and met a performance standard of 85% for specific performance measures.



The award recognizes Valley Baptist-Harlingen’s commitment in implementing a higher standard of care for heart attack patients, and signifies that Valley Baptist-Harlingen has reached an aggressive goal of treating these patients to standard levels of care as outlined by clinical guidelines from the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association.

“The American College of Cardiology Foundation and the American Heart Association commend Valley Baptist for its success in implementing standards of care and protocols,” said Gregg C. Fonarow, MD, FACC, FAHA, national steering committee chair for the ACTION Registry - Get with the Guidelines program. “The full implementation of acute and secondary prevention guideline-recommended therapy is a critical step in saving the lives and improving outcomes of heart attack patients.”

“Congratulations to all of the physicians, nurses, and other professionals whose hard work and commitment to providing quality patient care has earned Valley Baptist three ‘Get With the Guidelines’ awards for coronary artery disease, heart failure and stroke care,” said Bill Adams, CEO for Valley Baptist Medical Center-Harlingen. “This triple achievement reflects the physicians’ and employees’ commitment to providing Valley Baptist patients with a level of care that not only saves lives, but also improves the quality of patients’ lives once they leave our hospital.”

“Quality patient care is foremost in all that we do at Valley Baptist Medical Center-Brownsville,” added Leslie Bingham, Chief Executive Officer for VBMC-Brownsville. “We are proud of our physicians and our employees, who have made us the only hospital in Brownsville -- and one of only two in the Valley -- to receive the ‘Gold Plus’ award for care of stroke patients and the ‘Gold’ award for treating heart failure patients.”

Under the national protocols, heart patients are started on aggressive risk reduction therapies such as cholesterol-lowering drugs, beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, aspirin, diuretics and anticoagulants in the hospital. In the case of stroke, patients may receive life-saving medications such as tPA, Antithrombotics and DVT prophylaxis. Patients also receive counseling for risk factors, as well as thyroid management counseling and referrals for cardiac rehabilitation, during “teachable moments” before being discharged from the hospital.

“Facilities receiving recognition in these modules of ‘Get With the Guidelines’ have a proven commitment to delivering the highest quality of patient care,” said Carol Winick, Southwest Affiliate Vice President with the American Heart Association in Austin. “Ultimately, these awards translate into lives saved. Thank you, Valley Baptist, and congratulations!”

Each year in the United States, 795,000 people suffer a stroke, 5.2 million suffer from heart failure, and 565,000 suffer a new heart attack, according to the American Heart Association. In addition, heart disease and stroke rank as the number one killer of Hispanics in the United States. For more information, consult your physician and visit www.ValleyBaptist.net.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - STROKE

Stroke is a type of cardiovascular disease that affects the arteries leading to the brain and the arteries within the brain. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood (and oxygen) it needs, and that part of the brain starts to die.

Know the following warning signs of stroke and teach them to others – because with stroke, every second counts.

Warning Signs of Stroke

- 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

Stroke is a medical emergency – call 911 immediately if you experience symptoms. Learning to recognize the warning signs of stroke and acting quickly when they occur can mean the difference in surviving a stroke and minimizing long-term disability, or being physically and mentally devastated and dying from stroke. Help your loved ones by sharing this important information.

Each year in the United States, about 795,000 people suffer a stroke. Of stroke survivors, 22 percent of men and 24 percent of women die within a year, and for those aged 65 and older, the percentages are even higher. The number of stroke patients is expected to increase over the next decade because of an aging population and an increasing incidence of stroke.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - HEART FAILURE

Heart failure is a progressive condition in which the heart's muscle becomes weakened because of a heart attack or high blood pressure. The condition causes the heart to lose its ability to pump enough blood to supply the body's needs. Heart failure affects 5.2 million Americans, killing 57,000 people every year. But with earlier diagnosis and newer treatments, people with heart failure are able to continue enjoying their everyday activities and have a more normal life expectancy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION -- CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE

According to the American Heart Association, approximately 565,000 people suffer a new heart attack and 300,000 experience a recurrent heart attack each year. Statistics also show that within one year of a heart attack, 18 percent of men and 23 percent of women will die. Within five years after an attack, about 33 percent of men and 43 percent of women will die. Men and women can reduce their risk of coronary artery disease by working with their doctor to address risk factors such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking, stress, and a sedentary lifestyle (lack of exercise).

LINKS – List of Hospitals Nation-wide to Receive Awards for Stroke & Heart Failure Care

http://www.strokeassociation.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@hcm/@gwtg/documents/downloadable/ucm_428956.pdf

About Valley Baptist Health System

Valley Baptist Health System is an 866-bed faith-based regional health system located in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. It is focused on improving the lives of the people it serves by providing high quality health care and medical education throughout South Texas, guided by the healing and teaching ministry of Jesus Christ.

Valley Baptist extends many of its services beyond its facilities and into local communities, offering free screenings for the community, support groups and numerous educational opportunities. For more information, visit www.ValleyBaptist.net (and www.FaceBook.com/ValleyBaptistMedicalCenter).