



FOUNDATION

Mobile Telestroke Program at Hendricks Regional Health

FaceTime is well known as a great way to stay in touch with friends and family. However, it may surprise you to learn that Apple's popular video and audio calling service is a key component of our new mobile telehealth stroke program.

This bold initiative, which launched in late January, is a strong new weapon in the fight to reduce the impact of stroke in our community. It came to life under the leadership of Dr. Scott Cline, HRH neurologist, and through collaboration with our Emergency Department, EMS and Information Systems teams and is supported by funds raised by Hendricks Regional Health Foundation.

The race to tPA (clot-busting medication)

For patients experiencing a stroke, every second counts. With each passing minute, the patient's risk for permanent disability increases. These concerns may include physical and cognitive side effects leading to a loss of independence and quality of life.

As a healthcare team, our goal is to deliver brain-preserving care as soon as possible. In many cases, the gold standard treatment is tPA, also known as a "clot-busting drug." It works by dissolving the clot and re-establishing blood flow to the part of the brain being deprived of oxygen. To give our patients the best possible opportunity for recovery, tPA must be administered as quickly as possible from the onset of symptoms. The national standard is to be able to give tPA within 60 minutes from the patient's arrival to the ED. While HRH continues to beat this mark, we thought we could do better.

How the program works

The program was designed to shave precious minutes off the time it takes to administer tPA to our patients. It works through equipping local ambulances with iPads that can be used to connect first responders with our physicians. Through FaceTime, our ED team has the ability to not just communicate with the EMS professionals caring for the patient, but can actually see the patient and begin a medical evaluation. Before the patient even arrives, we can diagnose an acute stroke and activate the ED team needed to give tPA much faster than ever before.

HRH emergency physician Dr. Jim Nossett provided training to local EMS personnel before the program launched. Fire/rescue professionals in Plainfield, Brownsburg, Avon and Danville are currently participating in the pilot. There are plans to roll the pilot out to other local agencies as well.

Staying at the forefront

According to Dr. Cline, the mobile telehealth stroke program has tremendous potential to help us deliver tPA at rates unseen before in our region.

HRH has already achieved recognition as a certified Primary Stroke Center, and has received national accolades from Healthgrades as a five-star provider of stroke care. Through technology and collaboration, the mobile telehealth stroke initiative is one more way we are setting the bar for the treatment of stroke in our community.