

World Stroke Day warns 'time is brain'



Dr. Nils Mueller (Clay Wieland/Courtesy)



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Delray Medical Center uses World Stroke Day to educate community

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In recognition of World Stroke Day, which was Oct. 29, Delray Medical Center and its team of doctors and nurses are working to educate the community on the warning signs of a stroke and how to handle someone who is having one.

Dr. Nils Mueller, stroke medical director of Tenet's Florida Region, said when it comes saving a stroke patient, "Time is brain."

He said there are about 800,000 strokes a year in America, but that number is expected to jump to 1.25 million by 2025 as baby boomers grow older.

"Patient education and awareness is a huge deal now," Dr. Mueller said. "The good news is, we have many more tools now for stroke patients to make sure quality care is consistently present. Stroke mortality rates have slipped down significantly. We've also been able to get rid of patient delays and we're getting people to the right hospital to receive treatment faster."

The local Tenet Healthcare network sees about 2,700 stroke cases annually.

"Memorizing and making others aware of the acronym FAST helps with warning signs of a stroke," Dr. Mueller said. "'F' stands for facial weakness, 'A' is for arm weakness, 'S' represents speech problems and 'T' stands for time. If you observe any of these signs, do not hesitate to call 911."

Getting the stroke patient to the hospital with the shortest "door-to-needle" time is also key, he said. Administering the clot-busting drug tPA within 60 minutes after a patient's arrival is an essential part of patient survival and recovery.

Stroke coordinator at Delray Medical Center Elizabeth Glynn makes sure all stroke patients receive optimal care.

"Even if I can't meet with every patient individually, I look at all their paper work and work closely with doctors and our nursing staff to recognize a patient's personal risk factors so another stroke doesn't occur."

In addition to being proactive about stroke education, Glynn also emphasizes the importance of understanding stroke symptoms at the earliest sign.

While the average age of a stroke patient at Delray Medical Center is 82, she said, it is essentially something that can happen to anyone at any time.

"We have a support group for brain injuries here," Glynn said. "We also have Heart Matters seminars here on the third Thursday of the month."

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