

TO MEDIA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INDEPENDENCE HEALTH SYSTEM NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AGAIN FOR COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY STROKE CARE

Frick, Latrobe and Westmoreland Hospitals Receive American Heart Association Get With The Guidelines® - Stroke Gold Plus award for proven dedication to ensuring all stroke patients have access to best practices and life-saving care

GREENSBURG, PA, July 10, 2024 ... Independence Health System and its Westmoreland area hospitals once again have received the American Heart Association's Gold Plus Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke Quality Achievement Award for demonstrated commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines.

To earn this distinction, Independence Health Frick Hospital, Independence Health Latrobe Hospital and Independence Health Westmoreland Hospital each met aggressive clinical goals for treating patients in seven core standard levels of care as outlined by American Heart Association/American Stroke Association for multiple calendar years, as well as compliance with stroke quality measures during the specific evaluation period which includes data from January 1, 2021 through December 31,

2023. Gold Plus Quality Awards are advanced levels of recognition acknowledging hospitals for consistent adherence to quality measures. Independence Westmoreland Hospital also had the added achievement of Target: Stroke Honor Roll.

Stroke is the No. 5 cause of death and a leading cause of disability in the United States. 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, so brain cells die. Early stroke detection and treatment are key to improving survival, minimizing disability and accelerating recovery times.

Get With The Guidelines puts the expertise of the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association to work for hospitals nationwide, helping ensure patient care is aligned with the latest research and evidence-based guidelines. Get With The Guidelines - Stroke is an in-hospital program for improving stroke care by promoting consistent adherence to these guidelines, which can minimize the long-term effects of a stroke and even prevent death.

“Independence Health System is honored to be recognized for our dedication to helping our patients have the best possible chance of survival after a stroke,” said Chief Medical Officer Carol Fox, MD, FAAFP. “Get With The Guidelines-Stroke gives our teams evidence-based knowledge and clinical tools to use on a daily basis to improve outcomes. This recognition clearly demonstrates our commitment to putting the needs of our patients first. And while we are gratified that the consistency of our efforts are note-worthy, it is our stroke patients who are most grateful for the exemplary care.”

Each year, program participants qualify for the award by demonstrating how their organization has committed to providing quality care for stroke patients. In addition to following treatment guidelines, Get With The Guidelines participants also educate patients to help them manage their health and recovery at home.

“We are incredibly pleased to recognize (HOSPITAL NAME) for its commitment to caring for patients with stroke,” said Steven Messe, MD, volunteer chairperson of the American Heart Association Stroke System of Care Advisory Group and professor of neurology and director of fellowships of neurology at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. “Participation in Get With The Guidelines is associated with improved

patient outcomes, fewer readmissions and lower mortality rates – a win for healthcare systems, families and communities.”

Nationally recognized for quality care, Independence Health System comprises Butler Memorial, Clarion, Frick, Latrobe and Westmoreland Hospitals with a combined bed count of 925. With more than 1,000 physicians and advanced practice providers and 7,000 employees, the System is the third largest in western Pennsylvania serving a population base of 750,000 in a footprint spanning more than 10 counties.

The System includes tertiary programs rated among America’s best for cardiac care and surgery, earning [accolades from a number of prestigious outlets and organizations](#). Locally owned and locally controlled, Independence Health System offers its patients low-cost, high-quality care across the care spectrum in such specialties as cardiology, cardiovascular and thoracic surgery, orthopedics and sports medicine, minimally invasive and robotic surgery, women’s health and obstetrics, emergency medicine, behavioral health and primary care. Its network of outpatient centers sees more than 1.2 million visits annually. The homecare division further supports patients at all stages of life with home health and hospice services. Learn more at www.independence.health