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United Hospital District Promotes Stroke Awareness Throughout May
Efforts Align with Minnesota Stroke Program

Blue Earth, MN – April 30, 2020 – As an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital and in alignment with the Minnesota Stroke Program, United Hospital District (UHD) is building awareness of the signs and symptoms of stroke, which include calling 911 even during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The hospital’s efforts will be enhanced throughout the month of May, which is American Stroke Month.

According to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), stroke occurs every 40 seconds and is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. In Minnesota, stroke ranks as the sixth largest leading cause of death. UHD is hoping their educational efforts will improve outcomes for stroke patients and additionally reduce the economic impact of stroke on families and the national healthcare system. A 2019 study released by the American Heart Association tracked over \$45 billion in annual stroke-related medical costs, including procedures, hospitalizations, rehabilitation, and lost productivity due to mortality in 2014 and 2015.¹

Stroke awareness focuses on the simple acronym B.E. F.A.S.T., which stands for Balance loss, Eyesight changes, Facial droop/numbness, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty, and Time to call 9-1-1. The 911 component is especially important because stroke care starts in the ambulance with trained Emergency Medical Services professionals, who take important steps to increase the speed at which stroke treatment can begin. MDH recommends ambulance services take stroke patients to the nearest stroke-designated hospital.

As a certified stroke-designated hospital, UHD utilizes tele-stroke services to immediately connect patients arriving with stroke signs or symptoms to a neurologist in the Twin Cities via partnership with Abbott Northwestern Hospital. UHD is then able to start a plan of care or transfer the patient, if needed or desired, based on the Abbott neurologist’s recommendations. UHD plans a series of radio and print ads, plus social media posts to promote the B.E. F.A.S.T. message and improve stroke awareness.

UHD, located in Blue Earth, MN, is a system of care comprised of a 25-bed acute care hospital, comprehensive outpatient services, ambulance service and home health/hospice care, all supported by a 20-plus multi-specialty provider group with four clinic locations across two counties.

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¹ Benjamin EJ, et al. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics – 2019 Update: A report from the American Heart Association. Circulation. 2019;139:e1-e473.

STROKE? DON'T WAIT! B.E. F.A.S.T.

Stroke is an Emergency

- B** Balance Loss
- E** Eyesight Changes
- F** Facial Drooping
- A** Arm Weakness
- S** Slurred Speech
- T** Time to call 9-1-1

