



## UT Medical Center Stroke Team Earns Gold Plus for patient care.

*Local program's honor to be mentioned in upcoming issue of US News & World Report*

For the *fourth* consecutive year, **The University of Tennessee Medical Center's Stroke Center** will receive national attention for earning a prestigious award through the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association. Representatives at the medical center recently learned that UT Medical Center's Stroke Center is the only certified primary stroke center in the state of Tennessee to earn the 2011 Get With the

Guidelines Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award.

"Providing outstanding care to achieve optimal outcomes for our patients is our goal every second of every day at the UT Medical Center Stroke Center and the Gold Plus award is a tremendous honor as well as a reflection of that dedication to our community," **said Dr. Brian Wiseman**, Neurology Medical Advisor of UT Medical Center's Stroke Center. "Our multidisciplinary Stroke Center team focuses on top-notch care for our patients as well as providing stroke education, outreach and prevention measures to our entire community. As stroke is the leading cause of disability and fourth leading cause of death in our nation, we must always maintain that focus and commitment to those we serve."

Stroke care facilities receive this recognition through adherence to the stringent parameters of the Get With the Guidelines program regarding quality and performance improvement measures for the care of stroke. These indicators, which are reporting initiatives to measure quality of care, must be met for a minimum of 24 consecutive months in order to earn the award.

By receiving the award, UT Medical Center will earn recognition in the upcoming July edition of *U.S. News & World Report*. In a planned multi-page advertisement by the American Heart Association in the magazine, UT Medical Center's Stroke Center will join other centers across the nation being recognized for excellence in implementing and following the Get With the Guidelines program.

"The University of Tennessee Medical Center is to be commended for its commitment to implementing standards of care and protocols for treating stroke patients," **said Lee H. Schwamm, M.D.**, chair of the Get With the Guidelines National Steering Committee and director of the TeleStroke and Acute Stroke Services at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. "The full implementation of acute care and secondary prevention recommendations and guidelines is a critical step in saving the lives and improving outcomes of stroke patients."

**Dr. John Beuerlein**, medical director of the UT Medical Center Stroke Center, credits community outreach as well as patient and public education throughout the region by UT Medical Center for aiding in the awareness of stroke prevention measures. The medical center, the region's only academic medical center, offers a variety of educational opportunities to the public about the dangers and risks of stroke and how recognizing stroke warning signs can save a life.

There is no one signal that a person is having a stroke. For some people there may be severe pain in the form of a headache and for someone else it could be painless. If you experience any of the five warning signs of stroke, Wiseman said, call 911. **Stroke warning signs include:**

- Walk – Is your balance off?
- Talk – Is your speech slurred or face droopy?
- Reach – Is one side weak or numb?
- See – Is your vision all or partly lost?
- Feel – Do you have a severe headache?

On average, someone suffers a stroke in the United States every 40 seconds, according to the **American Heart Association/American Stroke Association**. Someone dies of a stroke every four minutes. While some stroke risk factors, including age, gender, race and family history, are not controllable, other factors can be controlled. The clinical team of stroke care experts at UT Medical Center urge people to address the controllable factors by quitting smoking and managing and treating their blood pressure and diabetes.

Participating hospitals in the **Get With the Guidelines program** of the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association must meet the guidelines by promoting the latest evidence-based treatment for patients with coronary artery disease, heart disease and stroke in an effort to improve health and save lives. UT Medical Center became the region's first Certified Primary Stroke Center in 2006 and earned Certified Primary Stroke Center recertification in 2008 and 2010. Primary Stroke Center certification is awarded by The Joint Commission, which is recognized as the nation's predominant standards-setting and accrediting body for healthcare organizations.