

December 29, 2008

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Hunterdon Medical Center Receives Stroke Center Designation From The State**

The left side of your face, arm and leg are numb. You're having trouble speaking, seeing and have suddenly developed a pounding headache. You realize you may be having a stroke, and the ambulance is on its way. The medical treatment you receive in the next few hours could save your life. The good news is that Hunterdon Medical Center has been designated as a Primary Stroke Center by the New Jersey State Department of Health and Senior Services for residents in Hunterdon, Somerset, Warren and Mercer Counties.

"Having this designation means that Hunterdon Medical Center has an acute stroke team, available to evaluate and treat a stroke patient in our Emergency Department within 15 minutes of arrival, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When a patient is having a stroke, every second counts. This rapid response team has been specially trained to know all the procedures and protocols and to implement today's stroke guidelines in a time-oriented manner," explained Manish Viradia, M.D., Neurologist who has been designated as the Medical Director for the Stroke Center at Hunterdon Medical Center.

Edward Spector, M.D., Chairman of the Emergency Department at Hunterdon Medical Center added, "It is important for the community to know that Hunterdon Medical Center follows state and national guidelines in implementing clinical protocols for the care of stroke patients, using the most up-to-date techniques to open clogged blood vessels and return blood flow to the brain while there is still a good chance for full recovery. The team approach to caring for a stroke patient includes education of the EMT's and Paramedics in the field to rapidly recognize the

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warning signs of a stroke and alert the Hunterdon Medical Center Emergency Department of the incoming stroke patient. A dedicated stroke team of emergency physicians, nurses, neurologist and radiologist all work together to coordinate care.”

The initial three hours after stroke symptoms have been diagnosed are crucial due to the fact that the only FDA approved drug that can be given to a stroke patient to stop the progression of the stroke and help reverse the neurological symptoms is t-PA, tissue plasminogen activator. This drug works by dissolving clots. A blood clot in the brain is the most common cause of stroke or known as ischemic stroke. If a patient arrives too late for t-PA treatment, in a small number of cases they may be transferred to a comprehensive stroke center for more invasive procedures if indicated. Hunterdon Medical Center’s partner is Overlook Hospital in Summit.

Dr. Viradia added, “We will not be able to stop strokes from happening, but we would like to decrease mortality and morbidity. It is important for stroke centers to educate the community on the warning signs of stroke symptoms as well as to treat patients rapidly as indicated by national guidelines. Controlling risk factors such as high blood pressure, cholesterol and to stop smoking can reduce a person’s risk for having a stroke.”

The American Stroke Association says these are the warning signs of a stroke:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

If you or someone with you has one or more of these signs, don't delay! Immediately call

9-1-1.

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#### About Hunterdon Medical Center

Hunterdon Medical Center is a 176-bed non-profit community hospital, providing a full range of preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic inpatient and outpatient hospital and community health services. HMC has partnered with Pegasus Emergency Group to deliver top-ranked emergency services to Hunterdon and surrounding counties. HMC's Emergency Department consistently ranks 99<sup>th</sup> percentile in Press Ganey customer satisfaction scores for hospitals with 30,000 – 40,000 patients a year in New Jersey.

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#### About Pegasus Emergency Group

Pegasus Emergency Group is a rapidly growing emergency medicine company with a commitment to excellence. We are dedicated to exceptional patient care, outstanding opportunities for physicians, and superb performance for our partner hospitals. With 100% growth in the last year alone, stay tuned for more exciting news about the company.

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