



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## Southeast Regional Pilot Acute Stroke System activated, ADPH announces

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and the Office of Emergency Medical Services are excited to announce the activation of the Southeast Regional Pilot Acute Stroke System (SRPASS) to serve patients in 18 southeast Alabama counties effective Aug. 26.

“Providing access to rapid stroke treatment within the first few hours of the onset of symptoms is vitally important in ensuring good patient outcomes,” said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. “We applaud our partners for working to establish a system that will dramatically improve the quality of care stroke patients can receive by saving precious time and delivering expert neurologic care.”

Stroke is the leading cause of serious long-term disability and the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. Patients who are having a stroke need to be quickly evaluated at a hospital, just like patients who are having a heart attack.

“Ischemic strokes, which are the most common type of strokes, can sometimes be treated and completely reversed by use of a ‘clotbuster’ drug called thrombolytic agent tissue plasminogen activator or ‘tPA,’” Dr. Sarah Nafziger, assistant state EMS medical director, explained. “Because of the need for urgency in treatment with tPA, these patients must be rapidly transported to a hospital capable of immediately performing a rapid exam to determine the type of stroke they are experiencing, and then treated with tPA when appropriate.”

Dr. John Campbell, medical director for stroke and trauma system development, Southeast Alabama EMS Region, said, “The Health Department has identified a network of hospitals with the commitment and the resources to care for stroke patients. This network will work with EMS agencies, as well as the Alabama Trauma Communications Center (ATCC), using an organized plan to route patients with signs of stroke to the closest hospital that is ready to care for them. The system will be constantly monitored to correct, improve and validate the quality of care provided.”

Operation of the stroke system will be similar to the Alabama Trauma System, which relies on voluntary participation by hospitals. Hospitals have been inspected and designated for the level of services they can provide, and each hospital will self-determine when it is available to take a stroke patient. Stroke system patient routing will be coordinated by a single high-tech

communication center, the ATCC, which coordinates patient transport to the appropriate facility and facilitates transfer of patients that require a higher level of care after initial treatment. The SRPASS relies heavily on the resources and participation of hospitals, emergency medical service personnel, and coordination by the ATCC. After the pilot program has been initiated, ADPH plans to start rolling out a statewide stroke system of care that will help ensure that patients experiencing stroke symptoms are transported to the closest hospital with the appropriate resources to care for them.

Dr. Stephen Suggs, medical director of the Primary Stroke Center at Baptist Medical Center South in Montgomery, said the system will help minimize death and disability from stroke. "The implementation of SRPASS will have a significant impact on stroke outcomes in our region and will allow us to give each stroke victim an opportunity for the best possible recovery."

This stroke system will operate in Autauga, Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Elmore, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Montgomery, Pike and Russell counties.

These are the SRPASS stroke hospitals and their designation levels. A Level II designation means a hospital can accept more complex cases than a Level III hospital.

Andalusia Regional Hospital, Level III  
Baptist Medical Center East, Level III  
Baptist Medical Center South, Level II  
Community Hospital, Level III  
Dale Medical Center, Level III  
East Alabama Medical Center, Level III  
Flowers Hospital, Level II  
Jackson Hospital, Level II  
Medical Center Barbour, III  
Medical Center Enterprise, III  
Mizell Memorial Hospital, Level III  
Prattville Baptist Hospital, Level III  
Southeast Alabama Medical Center, Level II  
Troy Regional Medical Center, Level III  
Wiregrass Medical Center, Level III

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8/26/13