

LAKWOOD REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER IN THE NEWS

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Lakewood hospital joins L.A. cardiac care system

By Pamela Hale-Burns, Staff writer
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LAKWOOD - The county has added another specialty center for treating heart attacks and the Lakewood site is expanding its cardiac services with new treatment facilities.

On Feb. 25, Lakewood Regional Medical Center was certified to join the ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) Receiving Center Network in Los Angeles County, making it a specialty center for the treatment of heart attacks.

"Achieving this designation further defines Lakewood Regional Medical Center's role in the community as a high quality provider of heart and vascular care," said Mark Korth, the Center's CEO.

These receiving centers are significant, since a STEMI is one of the most dangerous types of heart attacks. It occurs when one of the coronary arteries that supplies blood to the heart is blocked.

The County's STEMI Receiving Center Program was implemented in December 2006. Through strong working relationships between paramedics, emergency departments and cardiologist, patients experiencing a STEMI are quickly diagnosed, transported and treated.

"Fulfilling the certification criteria signifies Lakewood's ability to provide care in a safe, effective, and timely manner," Korth said. "The importance of time to treatment in heart attack care is widely accepted

and participation in the County STEMI Network provides the ideal system to increase operational efficiencies."

Paramedic transport of heart attack patients to Lakewood Regional Medical Center through the County's regionalized program began on March 1.

"Patient-centered care is the priority. Participating in the L.A. County regional system of STEMI care enhances the quality of care based on evidence-based research and treatment guidelines," Korth said. "Care of heart attacks is a critical and time-sensitive situation. The surrounding community will benefit greatly by having access to a capable facility that specializes in heart and care."

Having a more local specialized emergency networks for heart attack reduces treatment times for those suffering from a deadly type of heart attack.

"This designation is good news for everyone in the community," said Kevin Brown, Cardiovascular Services Administrator. "Bottom line is that we can save more lives because we are so close to the communities we serve and time is a most important factor in the treatment of a heart attack."

The Center is working to make the newly available services more effective for the community.

"The hospital is coordinating efforts with local emergency services to achieve the ideal system of care for patients experiencing heart attacks," Brown said. "Lakewood has strengthened its infrastructure by allocating appropriate resources and capacity to manage complex heart attack patients with specific door-to-treatment goals."

There are 34 STEMI hospitals in Los Angeles County. Before the Center's selection the nearest STEMI hospital's

were Long Beach Memorial, St. Mary Medical Center Long Beach, and Whittier Presbyterian.

The goal is to get ambulance patients with heart attack symptoms to the hospital's cardiac cath lab for treatment within 90 minutes of arriving in the Emergency Room.

Since the program started at the Center, four patients have been successfully treated, all receiving treatment within 50 minutes of being diagnosed by emergency response personnel as having symptoms of a heart attack.

The Center's new Cardiac and Vascular Center, a \$10 million expansion, is set to open in May.

"Lakewood Regional Medical Center is in the final phases of construction with anticipated use within the next two months. The new Heart and Vascular Center is equipped with two additional state-of-art cardiac cath lab procedure rooms," Korth said. "The new heart center also contains a family waiting area, cath lab observation unit, and dedicated admitting and reception area."

"Our developments have attracted several new physicians to our medical staff, and we are in the process of hiring additional nursing and technical staff to support our expanding heart and vascular services," Brown said.

For more information on the Center's heart and vascular services, call 800-813-4345.

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