

## **Pembroke Regional Hospital Achieves High Rankings In Stroke Care Report Card**

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PEMBROKE – The Pembroke Regional Hospital is pleased to share that its health care team has recently received top marks in a provincial stroke report card for several aspects of its regional stroke care.

Among the results in the most recent 2019-2020 report, PRH, which is the designated District Stroke Centre for Renfrew County, was ranked number one in the province for three aspects of care and was classified as a “high performer” in the top five for an additional two.

Ontario’s Annual Stroke Report provides an overview of stroke system performance in the province by ranking approximately 30 aspects of care using hospital-specific, regional and provincial data. The eleven provincial stroke networks and the hospitals within those use this report to guide planning and decision making and reflect best practice which leads to system improvements, and ultimately better outcomes for patients and families with stroke.

“We are one of the few places that has an integrated stroke unit that that co-locates patients requiring both acute medical care for stroke and rehabilitation,” said Sabine Mersmann, Senior Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services – Partnerships and Integration. “This unit is supported by a specialized team of health care professionals and has the capacity and ability to prioritize care for acute stroke patients in a timely manner.” She added that there are many benefits to having the patient access specialized stroke care as soon as medically possible.

She said that this enables PRH to have the shortest provincial wait time for admission to the Rehabilitation unit once the patient is medically stable.

PRH also has one of the highest referral rates to the hospital’s Stroke Prevention Program for patients who have been seen in the Emergency Department, often after experiencing a Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA). Ms. Mersmann said this is the direct result of processes that have been put in place and staff knowledge of the program. She added that Emergency Department referrals to the Stroke Prevention program can be made from any hospital within Renfrew County.

The hospital was also rated as a high performer in several areas including access to home-based rehabilitation and the number of minutes patients receive direct therapy while in rehabilitation - the aim being to allocate as many minutes as possible which leads to better outcomes, a quicker return home and a greater recovery of function.

“In addition to the areas recognized, we as a hospital are very proud of the work that has been done and the achievements that have been made in all areas of stroke care by those on our team,” said Pembroke Regional Hospital President and CEO Pierre Noel. “Each helps to

improve the hospital experience for our patients and their families and contributes to the individuals journeys of recovery.”

Physiatrist Dr. Debbie Timpson said that these latest results not only speak to the quality of care but also serve as a great tool for validating successes and identifying where improvements are required.

“From a physician perspective, it is important that our program be held accountable for the quality of the care that we provide while having provincial standards allows us to compare ourselves to our peers,” said Dr. Timpson. “It is rewarding for our rehab team, and important for our patients, to have objective proof that we not only meet but, in a number of areas, exceed expectations. These standards help us to work towards providing the best care possible for our patients.”

As the District Stroke Centre, PRH works together with the county’s paramedics, Home and Community Care and other community partners to ensure that patients receive the best care possible throughout their entire stroke journey, from calling 911 to being referred to support groups in the community.

Vascular Health and Ambulatory Clinics Manager Sonya Silver says that, “Knowing and understanding what symptoms of stroke are – one sided facial droop, one sided weakness and changes in speech, is the first step to getting help quickly and knowing it’s time to call 9-1-1.”

Currently, however, more than 40% of Renfrew County’s stroke patients fail to call 9-1-1 at the onset of symptoms so work is ongoing to educate the public around the importance of this.

“There are time sensitive treatments that some people qualify for that can greatly improve the outcome of a stroke. Paramedics are trained to assess for symptoms of stroke and bring you to the correct hospital to meet your needs. They also call the hospital prior to arriving so that the stroke team are ready and waiting for your arrival. In health care we often use the saying ‘time is brain’, meaning that when every minute matters, it is important to know what to do,” Ms. Silver said.

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