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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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## **Sharon Hospital & Yale Join Forces in TeleMedicine Providing Face-to-Face Neurological Care 24/7 for our Community**

**Sharon, CT** – Sharon Hospital is pleased to announce that starting in February 2011, it will begin a new telemedicine program, called TeleStroke, with Yale-New Haven Hospital for acute stroke care which will serve Northwest Connecticut, New York & Massachusetts.

“Joining forces with the Yale-New Haven TeleStroke team is the perfect progression for our Stroke Center,” said Gene Chin, MD, Co-Medical Director of the Primary Stroke Center at Sharon Hospital. “Their neurological expertise will enhance our stroke care by providing immediate 24/7 face-to-face bedside consultations via telemedicine,” he added.

“We are proud to be joining forces with the TeleStroke neurology team at Yale-New Haven Hospital,” said Kimberly A. Lumia, RN, MSN, MBA, President & CEO of Sharon Hospital, “this affiliation will provide highly-skilled stroke neurologists around-the-clock, who through the use of state-of-the-art technology, can rapidly and accurately diagnose the onset of stroke. This early diagnosis will save lives and improve patient outcomes,” she added.

Using a private internet connection, TV monitor, and camera, trained-stroke neurologists will assist Sharon Hospital’s Emergency medical team to get the right care, from the right providers, in the right amount of time, explained Melissa Braislin, SLP, Stroke Coordinator, Sharon Hospital.

“The Yale New Haven Hospital TeleStroke Network will be available to provide acute neurological expertise around the clock,” according to Ms. Braislin. “This TeleStroke Network allows a stroke neurologist from Yale New Haven Hospital to remotely examine the patient, interpret brain images, confirm diagnosis, and provide recommendations for treatment via video conferencing and imaging-sharing technologies. This model will provide close to 100,000 community members in Connecticut, New York and Massachusetts access to Yale New Haven Hospital’s quality neurological expertise 24/7, which is otherwise not available,” added Braislin.

The primary goal for Sharon Hospital is to provide rural residents appropriate treatments. Most notably, the use of Intravenous Recombinant Tissue Plasminogen Activator (IV rt-PA), often called ‘the clot buster’. This is a medication that is most effective when given soon after stroke and can only be administered within 4.5 hours after the stroke symptoms start. The use of this medication increases the stroke patient’s chances of having favorable outcomes and decreased disability. Through the TeleStroke program and our affiliation, our patients will also have access to other advanced interventions that are available at Yale New Haven Hospital (i.e., intra-arterial t-PA, clot retrieval), which require the diagnostic expertise of the tele-neurologist.

In addition to the medical diagnosis and treatment recommendations, joining the TeleStroke Network will allow some of our community members to stay at Sharon Hospital instead of being transferred to larger tertiary care facilities, which will decrease the burden placed on family members to travel long distances during a family member’s illness.

“Ongoing staff, physician, emergency responder and community education is simply vital,” states Jill Groody Musselman, Director Marketing and Public Relations at Sharon Hospital. “It remains critical to educate at the grass roots level. We want to emphasize that people should call 9-1-1 and get to the hospital as quickly as possible in the event of stroke” she added.

According to the American Stroke Association, stroke is a medical emergency. Know the warning signs of stroke and teach them to others:

- 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

**Call 9-1-1 immediately if you experience any of these symptoms! Time lost is brain lost!**

In addition to being a designated Primary Stroke Center (PSC) by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, Sharon Hospital has received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Silver Plus Performance Achievement Award. This award recognizes Sharon Hospital's commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care by ensuring that stroke patients receive treatment according to nationally accepted standards and recommendations. To receive the Get With The Guidelines Stroke Silver Plus Performance Achievement Award, Sharon Hospital achieved at least 12 consecutive months of 85 percent or higher adherence to all Get With The Guidelines Stroke Performance Achievement indicators and achieved at least 75 percent or higher compliance with six of ten Get With The Guidelines Stroke Quality Measures during that same period of time, which are reporting initiatives to measure quality of care. These measures include aggressive use of medications, such as tPA, antithrombotics, anticoagulation therapy, DVT prophylaxis, cholesterol reducing drugs and smoking cessation, all aimed at reducing death and disability and improving the lives of stroke patients.

For more information about the TeleStroke program or the risks & warning signs associated with stroke, visit [www.strokeassociation.org](http://www.strokeassociation.org) or call Sharon Hospital's Stroke Coordinator at 860.364.4446.

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