

Telemedicine comes to Medical Center Enterprise

<http://www.dothanfirst.com> 03/03/2015 06:56 PM



For stroke patients, each passing minute without treatment is a major risk. The challenge: limited staff and access to specialists.

"We don't actually have a neurologist on staff, so we have to utilize the surrounding hospitals to better serve our patients," said Michelle Watson, a nurse practitioner who works in the emergency room.

The latest technology, telemedicine, is a major solution to staffing hurdles, and Medical Center Enterprise is using it for the first time through a partnership with Specialists On Call, a service that will provide neurologists around the clock to see patients on demand. Specialists won't have to be in the room to recommend treatment. Staff members are calling it a win-win for both the hospital and patients.

"We'll take this machine into the patient's room," Watson said, describing how it works. "We'll dial in with a neurologist around the United States. He'll actually be able to visualize the patient, and he'll tell us what services and tests need to be done and what we need to do for the patient."

Doctors have worked to bring telemedicine to the hospital for the last few years. They say it's all about providing patient access and providing quick, emergency care.

"This is going to bring us faster service to our patients. It's going to enable us to have one-on-one access with a neurologist," said Watson.

The technology also helps hospitals cut back on staffing budgets.

"I think it's going to provide us with a lot more comfort, knowing that they're just a phone call away," Watson said.

It's a phone call possibly making the difference between life and death. Specialists On Call provides teleneurology services to 300 hospitals nationwide.



"We'll dial in with a neurologist around the United States. He'll actually be able to visualize the patient, and he'll tell us what services and tests need to be done and what we need to do for the patient," Watson said, referencing the machine used to connect with on-call neurologists.



Michelle Watson, a nurse practitioner who works in the emergency room at Medical Center Enterprise, describes how the hospital's partnership with Specialists On Call will help stroke patients receive immediate treatment.