

Media Release



Health
South Western Sydney
Local Health District

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Bankstown Hospital accredited as specialised stroke unit

Bankstown Hospital is now one of more than 20 Hospitals in NSW accredited as a 24/7 Acute Stroke Thrombolysis Centre. This means it can offer immediate access to clot-busting drugs that could save patients' lives and reduce the risk of permanent brain damage and disability.

According to the National Stroke Foundation, early admission to a Thrombolysis Centre is one of the biggest factors affecting the chance of survival following an ischaemic stroke caused by a blood clot.

Bankstown Hospital's Acting Director for Aged Care and Rehabilitation, Dr Fintan O'Rourke, said the Hospital's new accreditation will make a significant impact on the local community.

"Almost 1,000 strokes occur in Australia every week and timing is one of the major factors in preventing death or brain damage," Dr O'Rourke said.

"Everyone experiences and recovers from a stroke differently, so effective medical treatment is essential to diagnose, treat and rehabilitate patients individually as required," he said.

To qualify as an Acute Stroke Thrombolysis Centre, a hospital needs to have a 24/7 Imaging Department, 24/7 Neurology Service, 24/7 Emergency Department and a 24/7 Acute Stroke Unit with monitored beds and a team trained to care for patients with an acute stroke.

During National Stroke Week (9-15 September), Dr O'Rourke is urging everyone to be familiar with the signs of stroke:

- **F**ace: Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?
- **A**rm: Can they lift both arms?
- **S**peech: Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?
- **T**ime: Is critical. If you see any of these signs call 000 straight away.

Other signs of stroke may include one or a combination of:

- Weakness or numbness or paralysis of the face, arm or leg on either or both sides of the body.
- Difficulty speaking or understanding.
- Dizziness, loss of balance or an unexplained fall.
- Loss of vision, sudden blurring or decreased vision in one or both eyes.
- Headache, usually severe and abrupt onset or unexplained change in the pattern of headaches.
- Difficulty swallowing.

The signs of stroke may occur alone or in combination and they can last a few seconds or up to 24 hours and then disappear. For more information, visit www.strokefoundation.com.au