



# MEMORIAL HEALTH SYSTEM OF EAST TEXAS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Think F.A.S.T. Learn to Recognize a Stroke**

LUFKIN, TEXAS (May 18, 2009)... Although 80% are preventable, it is expected that nearly 795,000 people in the United States will have a stroke this year. Most strokes can be treated if they are recognized F.A.S.T. May is Stroke Awareness Month and Memorial Health System of East Texas is joining the National Stroke Association to raise public awareness about important stroke facts to reduce the incidence and impact of stroke.

According to the National Stroke Association, stroke is a brain attack. It is a type of cardiovascular disease that affects the arteries leading to and within the brain. Stroke can be caused by many risk factors that can be managed such as high blood pressure, weight control, alcohol consumption, smoking, diabetes, atrial fibrillation, and transient ischemic attack (TIA). Visit [www.stroke.org/RISK](http://www.stroke.org/RISK) for more information and downloadable fact sheets.

Time is critical in a stroke. Knowing and understanding stroke symptoms can save lives and reduce disabilities. Act F.A.S.T. by recognizing and responding to stroke symptoms using the F.A.S.T. method:

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|------------|---|
| F = Face   | Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?   |
| A = Arm    | Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?   |
| S = Speech | Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Does the speech sound slurred or strange?                         |
| T = Time   | If you observe any of these signs, it's time to call 9-1-1 or get to the nearest stroke center or hospital. |

Last year the T.L.L. Temple Foundation awarded \$5.8 million to the Methodist Hospital in Houston to create a much needed advanced stroke program in East Texas, where the mortality rate from stroke is the highest in Texas and up to four times the national average.

The grant from the T.L.L. Temple Foundation will help improve stroke mortality statistics by creating The Methodist Hospital East Texas Stroke Initiative, a partnership between Methodist in Houston and Memorial Health System of East Texas in Lufkin. This is the largest grant from a private foundation in support of an American public health collaboration specific to stroke program development and outreach education.

“Stroke is an enormous public health threat, and we know the devastating impact it has on East Texans,” said Jay Shands of the T.L.L. Temple Foundation, which is based in Lufkin. “This grant is about more than buying the right equipment and hiring stroke health care personnel. Through this partnership between Methodist and Memorial Health System of East Texas, we can be assured that our family and friends will have immediate access to top-notch stroke care, for generations to come.”

Over the course of the next three years, Methodist will help Memorial Health System of East Texas hire neurologists, nurse practitioners and other stroke-specific staff; train the staff on how to implement a Joint Commission-certified Primary Stroke Center, and purchase necessary equipment and technology. With the new program, Memorial hopes to improve stroke treatment and recovery for patients in the East Texas region, as well as improve stroke-related education to the community, emergency medical service (EMS) personnel and health care providers.

“Our Cardiovascular and Stroke Center of East Texas project is underway, so our collaboration with The Methodist Hospital and T.L.L. Temple Foundation is a perfect fit. We are excited that by 2011, we should become a Joint Commission-certified Primary Stroke Center and be able to enhance our level of care to residents in Angelina County and the surrounding areas,” said Bryant Krenek, President and CEO of Memorial Health System of East Texas.

### **About Memorial Health System of East Texas**

As the largest health care system in the deep East Texas area, Memorial Health System of East Texas is a private, not-for-profit hospital that provides care to almost a quarter of a million patients each year. Since its inception in 1949, Memorial Health System has paved the way for quality, innovative health care in East Texas. In fact, Memorial consistently ranks among the nations best for exceptional health care and patient satisfaction.

Memorial Health System of East Texas is comprised of four hospitals—Memorial Medical Center—Lufkin, Memorial Medical Center—Livingston, Memorial Medical Center—San Augustine, and Memorial Specialty Hospital, the only rural long-term acute care facility within the area. Memorial offers a wide array of services, including the newly renovated Arthur Temple, Sr. Regional Cancer Center, which has earned a three-year seal of approval with commendation from the Commission on Cancer. Additionally, Memorial is a regional cardiac care center affiliated with the Methodist-DeBakey Heart Center in Houston. The hospital also is known for providing the area’s only comprehensive diabetes center—The Horace C. Polk Regional Diabetes Center. Other centers of excellence include the Temple Imaging Center that offers some of the most advanced procedures in the area, including PET/CT scanning for cancer and Alzheimer’s, 64 Slice CT scanning, Open Bore MRI, 4D Ultrasound, and digital mammography. Other specialty areas include Orthopedic care, Women’s Services, Inpatient and Outpatient Rehabilitation, Homecare, Wound and Hyperbaric Therapy, Kidney & Diabetes Treatment, Sleep Disorders Treatment, and Express Lab. Memorial Health System of East Texas—founded and funded by the people it serves.