

January 2009

To CSA EMS Task Force Members:

Hello. We would like to take this opportunity to update you about an exciting new development with the Colorado Stroke Alliance and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. Our organizations have decided to merge the efforts of our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) resources to effectively develop a statewide EMS plan for STEMI and stroke systems of care.

The American Heart Association recently launched Mission: Lifeline. This is a national initiative to advance the systems of care for patients with ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI). The overarching goal of the initiative is to reduce mortality and morbidity for STEMI patients and to improve their overall quality of care.

Mission: Lifeline and Stroke share common issues and EMS collaboration will strengthen our efforts and improve EMS care for STEMI and stroke patients.

Some of the challenges Mission: Lifeline and Stroke face include creating an ideal system of care for STEMI and stroke patients through patient education. Patients and bystanders must be able to recognize the symptoms of acute myocardial infarction and stroke. In addition, they must realize the need for urgency by responding quickly and calling 9-1-1 to activate the EMS system.

EMS providers and dispatchers play a critical role in recognizing STEMI and stroke, including determining the timing and type of the EMS response to a STEMI or stroke call. A systems approach can assist in implementing procedures that can decrease the time from the initial call for a probable STEMI or stroke to the dispatching of EMS personnel.

First responders are an essential component for the success of an effective STEMI and stroke system of care. Whether serving a densely populated metro area or a rural area, EMS challenges are unique for each setting. By combining EMS efforts, the Colorado Stroke Alliance and American Heart Association want to assist EMS providers to find solutions that overcome the barriers to timely access to appropriate STEMI and stroke treatment and empower the EMS providers to save more lives.

The EMS role is invaluable in creating an ideal system of care for STEMI and stroke patients. We would like to ask for your participation with this process.

EMS providers that are interested in participating should contact Robin Rice at the AHA. Please see her contact information below.

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