

Case Study:

Patient Profile: Teleneurology Provides Swift, Lifesaving Treatment



As a long time nursing director with Christus St. Michael Health System and a member of its stroke team, Sandra Bowden realized the debilitating impact stroke was having on her community of Texarkana, TX.

Not unlike the national figures, stroke was the fourth leading cause of death for adults and the number one cause of disability in her community hospital serving four states in a 25 mile radius. Sandra was committed to making a difference and took a leadership position on the hospital's stroke planning team, spearheading their campaign to become a certified stroke center.

When she began to experience stroke symptoms at work, however, her interest in stroke became extremely personal.

Sandra's Experience

Shortly after an early morning meeting with the Christus stroke team, Sandra began to feel a tingling sensation around her ear and toward her face. By the time it spread down her left arm, a colleague noticed the left side of her face was drooping and she quickly escorted Sandra to the emergency room.

Once there, the Christus St. Michael Health System emergency department initiated stroke protocol and after the emergency room physician had checked her condition, she was immediately sent for a CT scan.

Top-Notch Treatment

By the time Sandra returned to the emergency room from her CT scan, Specialists On Call had been notified and their neurologist was already speaking with her attending physician.

"It was just a short time before the television monitor was brought in and the neurologist introduced himself. By the time he was doing the neurological exam, however, I felt like he was right there in the room," Sandra explains.

Sandra was treated by Specialists On Call's neurologist, Dr. Todd Samuels. A board certified neurologist who has been in private practice for more than 22 years, Dr. Samuels has worked with Specialists On Call for over three years. He chose to work with Specialists on Call because of its proven clinical effectiveness.

“I’ve been on both sides of the situation,” Dr. Samuels says. “I’ve been a community neurologist and I know for emergency situations I can provide much more timely care as a teleneurologist than I can as a bedside neurologist.”

Quick, Lifesaving Care

Via telemedicine, Dr. Samuels conducted a complete neurologic assessment of Sandra with the help of the attending nurse.

“During my consultation with Dr. Samuels, I was the center of his attention,” Sandra says. “He did his examination. He asked me questions. He addressed me by my name and did the same with my husband. We were his entire focus and he answered all my questions and made us feel comfortable during a very difficult time.”

Dr. Samuels explained to Sandra that he believed she was suffering a stroke and was eligible for the clot busting drug, tPA. He then went through the benefits and risks associated with that particular therapy and gave Sandra and her husband time to make a decision. Once they had decided to pursue treatment, Dr. Samuels oversaw the administration of tPA and was able to check in on her periodically.

“I don’t know what I thought he was going to do...I assumed he would order the drug and that was that, but he stayed and checked in on me,” Sandra recalls. “In a short time, I started to have resolution of symptoms and you could see Dr. Samuels was very pleased with the outcome.”

A Successful Outcome

Shortly thereafter, Sandra was transferred to the ICU where her condition continued to improve. The left side of her face continued to droop for the next couple of days and she experienced a minor issue with her gait and balance, but physical therapy resolved those conditions and today she lives a normal life with no deficits.

“By the time I got down to the ED and everything had been done, Specialists On Call was involved, Dr. Samuels was there, and all the proper things had been done with his guidance—the care I received was the highest quality,” Sandra recalls.

“I could not have asked for any better care. Dr. Samuels guided the treatment and the assessment, and the decision making included me and my husband. I couldn’t have asked for higher quality care,” says Sandra.

For more information about this case study, please contact:

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