

Local Health Integration Network

CE LHIN approves life-saving cardiac program

Code STEMI at Rouge Valley provides “gold-standard” care within 90 minutes

By David Brazeau

Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) has received approval to continue implementation of its “gold standard” pilot program in life-saving cardiac care intervention.

“We thank the Central East Local Health Integration Network (CE LHIN) Board of Directors for making this decision, which means the hospital will now continue and expand a program we piloted during the last year to bring unstable cardiac patients the specialized care they need within a crucial 90-minute window,” says Natalie Bubela, vice-president of programs, RVHS.

The program required CE LHIN approval late last year in order to continue beyond its pilot stage. “The Central East LHIN board decision represents a great start toward implementing this program.”

RVHS’ Code STEMI program, as it’s called, provides for percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) within 90 minutes of a patient presenting with symptoms allowing more lives to be saved.

“Simply put, the sooner a PCI treatment is provided by one of our cardiologists and the specialized team, the better a patient’s chance of surviving a heart attack,” says Bubela.

Deborah Hammons, CEO of the CE LHIN, says, “Rouge Valley’s performance data in the pilot provided the reassurance our board of directors needed to approve making this pilot a funded program. The hospital achieved the 90-minute gold standard timeframe for most of the patients, who came from the east Toronto area of the Central East LHIN.”

Hammons adds, “Equally impressive to having such a high-caliber PCI team in place is the fact that patients get to go home much sooner. Their average length of stay in hospital was reduced by two days in the RVHS pilot. With the Code STEMI program in place, the length of stay in an emergency department was also reduced by an average of seven hours. The CE LHIN board’s approval also reaffirms the Hospital Clinical Services Plan, which identified Rouge Valley as a regional centre for cardiac care earlier this year.”

This program also supports the aims in the CE LHIN’s 2010-2013 Integrated Health Service Plan of reducing the amount of time patients spend in the emergency department and decreasing the impact of vascular disease.

The pilot program at RVHS had been focused on the east Toronto area utilizing the centralized cardiac catheterization laboratories at Rouge Valley Centenary hospital campus. Rouge Valley is now beginning to expand the program to Durham Region sometime in the new year.

Rouge Valley's Code STEMI program is being provided in collaboration with The Scarborough Hospital and Lakeridge Health Corporation in an effort to serve residents in the east Toronto and Durham communities. The program is being funded through the CE LHIN for \$589,000 in 2009-10 and \$500,000-a-year thereafter.

What is a percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI)?

Percutaneous coronary intervention is a treatment procedure that unblocks narrowed coronary arteries of the heart without surgery. PCI, commonly known as angioplasty, is a therapeutic procedure used to treat the stenotic (narrowed) coronary arteries, associated with coronary heart disease. It can involve several treatment strategies. As part of the PCI procedure, a tiny balloon is inflated within the coronary artery to crush the plaque into the walls of the artery allowing for a more normal blood flow in the heart.

What is STEMI?

Segment (ST) elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI). Myocardial infarctions (heart attacks) occur when a coronary artery suddenly becomes blocked, or at least partially blocked. This causes some of the heart muscle to become infarcted – meaning it dies or is dying.

David Brazeau is the Director of Public Affairs & Community Relations at Rouge Valley Health System.

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