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N.C. Stroke Association Makes Grant to Cleveland Regional Medical Center

Grant will support development of the hospital's stroke program in its commitment to achieve Primary Stroke Center Certification

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (February 8, 2011) — The [N.C. Stroke Association](http://www.ncstroke.org) announced today that it has made a \$15,000 grant to Cleveland Regional Medical Center in Shelby, N.C., to assist in the development of the hospital's stroke program on its route to achieve Joint Commission Primary Stroke Center certification.

“We are thrilled to grant these monies to Cleveland Regional,” said Beth Parks, NCSA director. “During 2011, our focus is on providing grants and expanding our programs to improve stroke identification, prevention and patient education, particularly in high risk and underserved areas of the state.”

The Joint Commission's Primary Stroke Center Certification Program recognizes centers that make exceptional efforts to foster better outcomes for stroke care. “Cleveland Regional will apply for Primary Stroke Center certification in the late spring of 2011,” said Denise Wilkinson, Cleveland Regional's Clinical Performance Improvement Coordinator and Stroke Program Coordinator. “Our organization has a commitment to achieve this goal, and in the current economic environment, funding for additional resources in rural health care settings is challenging. These grant funds will support our stroke care initiatives so that we can better meet the needs of the community we serve.”

North Carolina is part of the nation's “Stroke Belt,” with some counties having a death rate from stroke that is twice as high as the national average. Cleveland County's stroke mortality rate exceeds the state average. “Many of our patients fail to manage their stroke risk factors and come to the hospital too late to receive the most effective treatment,” Wilkinson explained. “The NCSA grant will help fund the Stroke Coordinator role and build a strong stroke program throughout the continuum of care.”

Cleveland Regional recently implemented a Code Stroke process and appointed a physician as Stroke Program Director. It is a beta testing site for the Carolinas Medical Center Telestroke program and has put into place committees to provide program oversight and ensure implementation of best practices. In addition,

the hospital is exploring opportunities to partner with existing community education programs, such as Faith Community Nursing and the Cleveland County Health Department. “A portion of the grant will be used to implement NCSA’s [Beyond the Hospital](#) program for patients discharged with a diagnosis of hemorrhagic or ischemic stroke,” Wilkinson said.

NCSA is a non-profit organization that assists N.C. hospitals in broadening their reach through stroke programs and protocols, addressing prevention and education through its [Stroke Risk Identification Program](#), and post-stroke services through its [Beyond the Hospital](#) program. The [NCSA Partnership Grant Program](#) assists hospitals in funding NCSA’s stroke prevention, education and post-stroke programs for their communities.

“NCSA has been a wonderful resource for all types of questions related to best practices for stroke care,” Wilkinson said. “There have been many opportunities to network with colleagues about program design, information sharing and strategies to make an impact on our opportunities to improve care.”

About the N.C. Stroke Association

*[NCSA](#) is a 501 (c) 3 organization founded in 1998 by a group of physicians and lay people who saw the need to address the state’s increasing prevalence of stroke and its attendant disabilities. With operational seed money from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, NCSA began to fulfill its mission to reduce the **incidence** and **impact** of stroke in North Carolina through collaborations to facilitate **screening, education, outcome assessments and advocacy**. For more information, visit <http://www.ncstroke.org>.*