

# Fast Response, Life-Changing Care for Stroke Patients

*Leading-edge technology and systemwide expertise, from initial response to follow-up treatment, is making a difference.*

Quick treatment for stroke has long been known as a key factor in saving brain function for the most successful recovery. But expert care during and after treatment is just as vital. The NorthShore Neurological Institute is utilizing the latest technologies to create a seamless, systemwide stroke program across Chicagoland. Part of NorthShore University HealthSystem, the Institute provides this coordinated care at all six of NorthShore's hospitals.

From the moment a patient presents with symptoms at one of the hospital emergency departments, a team effort begins. Strokes are most often caused by blood clots that block vessels supplying oxygen to the brain. ER physicians are stroke-trained; after stabilizing the patient, they immediately send them for CT or MRI scans to determine where and how severe the blockage is.

## BREAKTHROUGH TECHNOLOGY

The scans are sent from the scanner and directly fed into Viz.ai, artificial intelligence software that interprets brain scans in as little as 12 seconds. Viz.ai then sends its results to on-call stroke neurologists, stroke neurosurgeons and others. "The team can be reviewing information on their phones, making decisions before

the patient has made it back to their room after the scan," says Shakeel Chowdhry, M.D., surgical director of the NorthShore Stroke Program. "Sometimes, tPA, an FDA-approved blood thinner, will successfully clear the blockage. But if surgical intervention is needed, we can be removing blood clots in as little as 15 minutes. Viz.ai is a game changer."

NorthShore was the first health system in Chicago equipped with Viz.ai. And now they are consulting with the company's research team to further advance development of the technology and expand its use.

Telestroke is another important tool for streamlining diagnosis and treatment. It interfaces with phones, computers and tablets to enable neurologists and neurosurgeons to communicate directly with patients in their hospital room or the emergency department from anywhere. They can visually evaluate them remotely for specific stroke symptoms. This can greatly speed up diagnosis and treatment.

## COORDINATED, SEAMLESS CARE

Prompt intervention is only the beginning of a stroke patient's recovery journey. According to Richard Munson, M.D., medical director of the NorthShore Stroke Program, "The

goal of the intervention is to stabilize the brain, to quickly restore proper blood flow. After that, we work to give patients the best possible outcome—we do an in-hospital evaluation of their specific needs, then map out a recovery plan. Just as important, we help patients understand how to prevent future strokes."

Besides neurologists and neurosurgeons, NorthShore's dedicated stroke teams include advanced practice nurses (APNs), and physical, occupational and speech therapists. Once patients are released from the hospital—to acute rehab, a skilled nursing facility or home—the team continues to follow up with them. An outpatient APN checks in with patients within the first week or two. A stroke neurologist then consults with patients to assess progress and any issues they face. And they keep following up, annually. "From the time they enter the ER, we follow them," Dr. Munson says. "We get to know them, their family, issues they face—all to keep them stroke-free."

For more information about the stroke program at NorthShore, visit [northshore.org/stroke](http://northshore.org/stroke).

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