

Code STEMI at MMH

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

This year, about 1.4 million people will suffer a heart attack. Approximately 400,000 of those heart attack victims will experience a STEMI (ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction) — a complete block in blood flow to a portion of the heart. Unless steps are taken quickly to eliminate the block and restore blood flow to the heart, the patient is at a greater risk of dying or becoming debilitated.

Melissa Memorial Hospital (MMH) has taken steps to make sure heart attack patients of eastern Phillips County receive timely care in order to reach the best outcome possible.

MMH has adopted a program called “Code STEMI” and has provided specialized training for medical personnel to follow specific protocols. The program and protocols all were developed using best practices identified through extensive research.

First and foremost, patients and their family members play a key role in getting timely care for heart attack patients. If family members or loved ones have chest pains or other symptoms that may be a heart attack, MMH urges a call to 911 immediately.

With the call, a process begins. When a patient arrives at the emergency room, health care providers follow a process asking specific questions and taking certain actions based on the answers to each question. One course of action is providing clot-busting agents in an attempt to restore blood flow.

When the patient is found to have a block in blood flow to the heart, a STEMI, physicians call for Med Evac, helicopter transport, to the Cardio Vascular Institute of North Colorado at North Colorado Medical Center in Greeley. Also an integral part of Code STEMI, the flight nurses know the standardized treatment plans, communication, transfer protocol and data the physicians at NCMC will need and they prepare those en route.

The other call is to the cardiologist at NCMC to alert him or her the patient is being transferred. The process of transferring from one hospital to another is intensive with a great deal of paperwork and coordination between facilities. With the Code STEMI program, the transfer is automatic with no paperwork hurdles, and the focus remains solely on the patient care.

Code STEMI at MMH

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

At NCMC, caregivers are specially trained to provide treatments to restore the blood flow through what's called percutaneous coronary intervention therapy, more commonly known as stents or balloon angioplasty. Open heart surgery is also an option at NCMC.

Two things to note, while those types of interventions are not available at MMH, the goal remains to get the best care available for patients, and MMH believes the Code STEMI system does that. Second, timely care is critical. Unless a blockage in the artery is eliminated quickly to restore blood flow, the patient is at great risk of death or debilitation.

According to the American Heart Association, about 30 percent of STEMI patients do not receive any form of treatment to restore blood flow, whether it's through medication or interventions. The more time that elapses before a heart attack patient receives treatment, the more heart muscle is lost.

The Code STEMI process is standardized so every time the code is called, MMH knows to what extent possible, what to expect. Removing the variables also removes wasted minutes and gets patients the care they need as quickly as possible.