



TeleCare Network

A Cooperative Effort Among St. Alexius Medical Center And TeleCare Network Members

Turtle Lake uses Telemedicine for Wellness

Community Memorial Hospital in Turtle Lake, ND is taking part in the 2007-08 Wellness Program through St. Alexius Medical Center by using the new videoconferencing equipment located in Boniface Auditorium at St. Alexius. The new equipment allows education programs conducted in Boniface to be broadcast live to outlying hospitals and facilities in the TeleCare Network. The employees of Community Memorial were able to participate in one education session in May, and are planning to connect for the sessions scheduled for June and July. By attending these education sessions, Wellness Program participants will receive one self-directed learning (SDL) point per session. A total of 12 SLD's are needed to meet the self directed learning requirement. Education presentations are scheduled through the end of the year by the St. Alexius Education Department. The June session was on over-the-counter medications, and the July session will cover compression stockings.



"St. Alexius started the Wellness Program in 2003 to enhance the health and well-being of our workforce," says Marlys Verwey, education coordinator for the program. She adds, "The program is designed to cut down on the medical center costs due to employee injury or illness, and also offer an incentive to the employee for eating healthy and exercising." The Wellness Program provides a cash bonus at the end of the year to each eligible employee. The bonus is awarded if an employee achieves 5 of the 7 necessary requirements within the year. In addition to the self directed learning sessions, the program criteria also includes nutrition, physical activity, injury free, health care use, sick leave use and spiritual wellness. For more information on the program contact Marlys Verwey in the education department at 530-7000, ext 7714.

May – National Stroke Prevention Month

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in American and the number one cause of adult disability. However, 80% of strokes are preventable!

What is a Stroke?

A stroke occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery or a blood vessel breaks, interrupting blood flow to an area of the brain. When either of these things happen, brain cells begin to die and brain damage occurs.

When you have a stroke and brain cells die, certain abilities controlled in that area of the brain are lost. This may include speech, movement or memory. People who experience a stroke are affected differently because of where in the brain the stroke occurs and how much of the brain is damaged.

Strokes can be minor with such problems as weakness in the arms or legs, or may be more extensive with paralysis on one side of the body or loss of speech. Only 1/3 of people recover completely from a stroke.

Prevention

Steps that you can take to prevent a stroke include maintaining a healthy lifestyle by keeping your blood pressure and cholesterol under control, maintaining a healthy weight by eating a balanced diet, quitting smoking and drinking in moderation. Women are especially at high risk of stroke if they are diabetic, pregnant, menopausal, on hormone replacement therapy, or have high blood pressure or migraine headaches.

If you think a loved one has experienced a stroke, you need to act **F.A.S.T.**:

F= Face – Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A= Arms – Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift upward?

S= Speech – Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Does the speech sound slurred or strange?

T= Time – If you observe any of these signs, it's time to call 9-1-1.

Treatment

To minimize disability, stroke victims must be treated right away. At St. Alexius Medical Center we have become one of the few hospitals in the region to have a primary stroke center. The St. Alexius Stroke Center is staffed with a multidisciplinary team of stroke experts who provide 24-hour rapid response. We strive to reduce death and disability and improve the overall quality of care for people afflicted by stroke.



The care for stroke victims starts in the Emergency & Trauma Center and continues through inpatient hospitalization and rehabilitation. Our leading edge Intensive Care Unit and Radiology facility ensure the highest standard of care and the most accurate diagnostic techniques.

Smoking Cessation Group in Turtle Lake

A six week smoking cessation class was held over telemedicine with Community Memorial Hospital in Turtle Lake during March and April. Lori Jorgenson and Deb Runge, both respiratory therapists at St. Alexius, conducted the one hour class each week for six weeks. Sandy Helgeson, telehealth coordinator at Community Memorial says, "The employees who participated in the class were very pleased with the education and appreciated having the classes available at the hospital."



Telecare Taskforce Meets

A TeleCare Network Taskforce meeting was held in April in the telehealth conference room at St. Alexius Medical Center. Coordinators from Rolla, Turtle Lake, Ashley, Dickinson, Williston, Hazen and St. Alexius attended the two and half hour meeting. A taskforce meeting has not been conducted since last year so a full agenda was covered. The information discussed at the meeting included the new equipment, refurbished teledoc, goals for 2007-2008, education requests for 2007, addition of new sites through BTWAN, protocol for using the new system and also individual site concerns.

Don Larson, the technician responsible for rebuilding the teledoc, met with the group over video conference from the University of North Dakota School of Medicine in Grand Forks, ND. Don informed the group of the changes made to the teledoc and answered questions from the rural site coordinators that are already using the refurbished teledoc.

Grand Rounds Education Schedule

The University of North Dakota School of Medicine will continue to conduct grand rounds over videoconferencing throughout 2007.

Each grand round session is scheduled from 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. CST. The programs are free of charge and continuing education credits are available from the University of North Dakota. Although the programs are intended for physicians, mid-levels and nurses, anyone who is interested may attend. Contact your local telehealth coordinator or the St. Alexius Telehealth Department at 1-800-393-7130 if you would like to participate.

The Telecare Network still serving rural ND

Telemedicine's arrival in the world of technology was in the early '80s, but a study by the Institute of Medicine in 1998 showed that only one telemedicine program initiated between 1986 and 1998 was still running. Now, however, the acceptance of telemedicine seems to be on the rise again. A search on the University of Iowa's Hardin Library web site shows information on at least 19 state projects using telemedicine to delivery healthcare in 17 states. In addition there were more than 20 government or military telemedicine projects. An additional boost to the new telemedicine programs is that The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have begun to reimburse providers for specific telemedicine procedures.

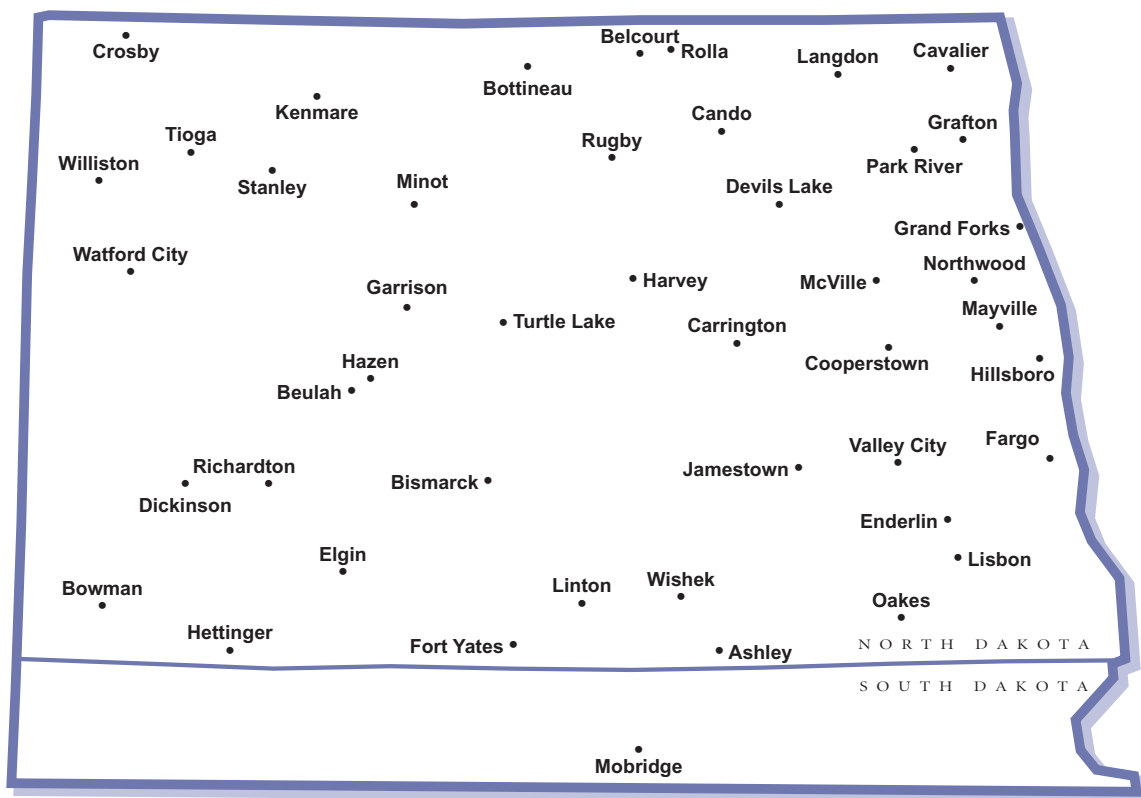
St. Alexius Medical Center instituted its telemedicine program, the TeleCare Network, in the fall of 1995. The network continues to contribute to both the educational and healthcare needs of rural facilities and patients in western and central North Dakota. The network started as a pilot project between St. Alexius and two rural facilities, Community Memorial Hospital in Turtle Lake and Garrison Memorial Hospital in Garrison. After five years the program was serving 22 facilities, either a hospital, clinic or nursing home. The program received grant funding from 1997-2004 from the Office for the Advancement of Telehealth. Since the grant ended, reimbursement of telehealth consultations has started from Blue Cross/Blue Shield and medicaid.

In 2006 the TeleCare Network transferred over to the Bioterrorism Wide Area Network, controlled by the North Dakota Healthcare Association. The BTWAN allows the TeleCare Network the ability to connect to additional sites in and out of North Dakota, not previously included in the TeleCare Network. For questions regarding the TeleCare Network call 1-800-393-7130.



New Equipment for Archway Mental Health Services

A change is in store for psychiatrists, psychologists and nurse practitioners working in Archway Mental Health Clinic at St. Alexius Medical Center. This fall the TeleCare Network will install video conferencing equipment at the clinic to allow the providers easier access to seeing their patients over telemedicine. Currently, a provider has to walk from Archway Clinic located on the third floor of Mid Dakota Clinic, to the St. Alexius Telehealth Department located on the third floor of the Center of Excellence building. In addition to the convenience of having equipment located right in the clinic, the providers will also be able to see more patients, by reducing their time away from the clinic.



Resource Information

For further information, check out our *WEB SITE* at www.st.alexius.org/telecare. Please feel free to forward any suggestions, comments or questions to us at telecare@primecare.org or telephone us at 701-530-7057 or 1-800-393-7130.

TeleCare Network Newsletter is published quarterly for members to provide information regarding telemedicine services via the TeleCare Network. If you have any questions about this issue or topics for future newsletters, call the St. Alexius Telemedicine Services Office at (800)393-7130.

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