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## **New Robot Helps Bring Specialized Care to Stroke Patients at Northside Hospital-Cherokee**

According to the American Stroke Association, roughly 795,000 people experience a new or recurrent stroke each year. It is the nation's third leading cause of death. Now, Northside Hospital-Cherokee has rolled out its newest tool to give stroke patients in the Emergency Department (ED) immediate access to specialists, when they need it most. M.A.C.S. (Mobile Access Consultation Services) is a wireless, mobile, remote-presence robot that allows physicians, from any location, to interact with patients and staff in the hospital's ED. This is the only such robot north of Atlanta and just the second in Georgia.

"When someone comes into the Emergency Department with signs of stroke, as caregivers, we must work quickly to assess and treat the patient, in order to prevent severe disability or death," said Jan Johnson, RN, chief nursing officer, Northside Hospital-Cherokee. "Time is of the essence; so it's important to have the necessary experts available immediately."

Specialists, such as neurologists, are required to take call in the hospital's ED, but often are tied up in their practice or elsewhere and cannot immediately leave, resulting in delays for patients. With M.A.C.S., within moments of a request for consultation – anytime, day or night – the neurologist can connect to the robot (via computer workstation), drive it to the nurse's station or patient's room, consult with on-site staff, review the patient's medical records, examine and talk directly to patients, and give orders and further instructions. The physician has full control of the robot and its capabilities. An LCD screen, atop the 5-foot-tall robot, allows patients, family and staff to see the physician's face in real time.

Northside Hospital-Cherokee sees about 70 patients a year with stroke or related diagnoses. Previously, patients with more severe strokes had to be transferred to other hospitals for treatment. M.A.C.S. changes that; so more patients can remain in Cherokee County for care. M.A.C.S. allows Northside Hospital-Cherokee to have neurology coverage 24/7, 365 days a year.

"In stroke care, time lost is brain lost. New stroke treatments must be started within 3 hours after patients develop symptoms," said Keith Sanders, M.D., neurologist on staff at Northside Hospital-Cherokee. "The new robot at Northside Hospital-Cherokee means that stroke patients there will be evaluated and treated much faster."

M.A.C.S. connects stroke patients to physicians from AcuteCare Telemedicine (ACT), a group of board-certified neurologists with more than 60-years-combined experience in stroke care. Each of the physicians is on staff at Northside Hospital in Atlanta, which is nationally certified as an Advanced Primary Stroke Center, giving patients the most comprehensive stroke care available.

“With the help of the hospital ED staff, we have developed protocols to expedite stroke care,” said Dr. Sanders, who also serves as COO of AcuteCare Telemedicine. “ACT is thrilled to be working with Northside to offer this new level of care in Cherokee County.”

In 2011, Northside Hospital-Cherokee completed a significant renovation and expansion of its ED to better accommodate the growing needs of the Cherokee County community.

“We are very excited about M.A.C.S. and other recent positive changes in our Emergency Department and about what they mean to the future of stroke care at Northside Hospital-Cherokee,” said Johnson.

If you think you or a loved one is experiencing symptoms of stroke, call 9-1-1 immediately. To learn more about stroke warning signs and the causes of stroke, or about services available at Northside Hospital-Cherokee, visit [www.northside.com](http://www.northside.com).

*The Northside Hospital health care delivery system is a not-for-profit health care provider and has served north Metro Atlanta for more than 40 years. With more than 2,200 physicians and 7,400 employees, the hospital sees nearly 700,000 patient visits a year. Staff provide a full range of health care services, including women’s health, cancer care, emergency care, surgery, specialty medicine and a wide array of outpatient services at many locations. Northside Hospital offers high-quality health care at Northside Hospital-Atlanta in Sandy Springs, Northside Hospital-Cherokee in Canton and Northside Hospital-Forsyth in Cumming.*

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