



## NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **The Joint Commission and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association Launch New Certification Program for Comprehensive Stroke Centers**

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – September 4, 2012) The Joint Commission and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association announce the September 1, 2012 launch of their new [Disease-Specific Care Advanced Certification Program for Comprehensive Stroke Centers](#).

The goal of this new level of certification is to recognize the significant differences in resources, staff and training that are necessary for the treatment of complex stroke cases. The Joint Commission and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association anticipate that, over time, municipalities and regions will develop a formal referral network so the most complicated stroke cases can be treated at the centers best equipped to provide the specialized care that can lead to the best possible outcomes for stroke patients. It is anticipated that there may be more than 200 certified comprehensive stroke centers in the U.S. over the next few years.

“Stroke can be devastating, but the proper treatment program can make a tremendous difference for patients. The Joint Commission and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s advanced certification program will help health care organizations focus on the care processes that produce the best outcomes for complex stroke cases and give Americans who suffer a stroke confidence that these health care organizations are committed to quality care,” says Jean Range, M.S., R.N., C.P.H.Q., executive director of Disease-Specific Care Certification, The Joint Commission.

“The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association is pleased to be a part of the Advanced Certification Program for Comprehensive Stroke Centers. Primary Stroke Centers have greatly improved the care and outcomes for stroke patients and we anticipate that the growth, certification and proliferation of Comprehensive Stroke Centers will build on that

success to have a similar effect for those patients with the most severe and challenging types of strokes.” says Mark Alberts, M.D., FAHA, American Heart Association/American Stroke Association spokesperson and Professor of Neurology and Chief of the Division of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Advanced Certification for Comprehensive Stroke Centers builds on the [Advanced Certification for Primary Stroke Centers](#) that is based on the Brain Attack Coalition's "[Recommendations for the Establishment of Primary Stroke Centers](#)" (The Journal of the American Medical Association, June 21, 2000, Vol 283, No. 23). There are currently more than 900 certified Primary Stroke Centers that have an established, formal program to treat stroke patients effectively and consistently with the goal of improving care and outcomes.

For more information about the Advanced Certification for Comprehensive Stroke Centers program, please call 630.792.5291 or e-mail [dscinfo@jointcommission.org](mailto:dscinfo@jointcommission.org).

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Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits more than 19,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including more than 10,300 hospitals and home care organizations, and more than 6,500 other health care organizations that provide long term care, behavioral health care, laboratory and ambulatory care services. The Joint Commission currently certifies more than 2,000 disease-specific care programs, focused on the care of patients with chronic illnesses such as stroke, joint replacement, stroke rehabilitation, heart failure and many others. The Joint Commission also provides health care staffing services certification for more than 750 staffing offices. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org).

About the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association Hospital Certification Program:

The familiar Heart-Check mark now helps consumers evaluate their choices in hospital care. Each mark given to a hospital is earned by meeting specific standards for the care of patients with heart disease and/or stroke. The Heart-Check mark can only be displayed by hospitals that have achieved and defined requirements set by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. For more information on the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association Hospital Accreditation Program visit [www.heart.org/myhospitals](http://www.heart.org/myhospitals).

About the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association:

The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org) or call any of our offices around the country.