**News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Sherri Buri McDonald**

Media Relations, PeaceHealth

541-520-8219 (cell)

sburimcdonald@peacehealth.org

***RiverBend’s Comprehensive Stroke Center earns “Gold Plus” award for stroke care for 10th straight year***

(Springfield, Ore.) — For the 10th straight year, the PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend Stroke team has earned the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Get with The Guidelines® – Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award.

In addition to the Stroke Gold Plus Award, the RiverBend team has earned Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite, along with two new awards – Stroke Advanced Therapy Honor Roll and Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll. These achievements recognize the team’s commitment to providing excellent care for stroke and diabetes patients, according to nationally recognized, evidence-based practice guidelines.

“We are honored to have once again been recognized by the American Heart Association for our care and treatment of stroke patients,” commented Dr. Elaine Skalabrin, stroke medical director at RiverBend. “Our specialists provide the most advanced stroke care available, and our communities throughout the region have come to rely on us to treat even the most complex cases. These awards are a testament to the team’s dedication to providing the highest level of care possible.”

To earn the Gold Plus award, RiverBend achieved 85 percent or higher adherence to all required achievement measures, and 75 percent or higher compliance with all 10 quality measures. Achievement and quality measures are aimed at decreasing long-term disability and mortality due to stroke diagnosis.

To qualify for the Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite designation, RiverBend met specific quality measures developed to reduce the time between the patient’s arrival at the hospital and emergency treatment.

In addition to the Get with the Guideline awards, RiverBend’s Stroke Center has achieved Comprehensive Stroke Center certification from Det Norske Veritas (DNV) Healthcare in 2019 – the highest level of certification a stroke center can achieve. RiverBend is the only Comprehensive Stroke Center between Sacramento and Portland, and it addresses the full spectrum of stroke-care diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and education - and has established clear metrics to evaluate outcomes.

Eighty-five percent of strokes are ischemic and occur when a blood clot blocks blood flow to part of the brain. The brain cells in the immediate area begin to die from lack of oxygen and nutrients. Quickly treating ischemic stroke patients with alteplase (t-PA) and emergency mechanical thrombectomy offers the patient the best opportunity for a positive outcome.

RiverBend’s Comprehensive Stroke Center uses the most up to date treatments for ischemic strokes, such as alteplase (t-PA), a clot buster, and mechanical thrombectomy procedures for the large arteries of the brain. Alteplase (t-PA) is the only drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat acute ischemic stroke. If given intravenously in the first three hours after the start of stroke symptoms, alteplase (t-PA) has been shown to significantly reduce physical deficits caused by ischemic stroke and decrease long-term disability. Emergency mechanical thrombectomy is the physical removal of clots from the carotid arteries and largest cerebral arteries of the brain causing stroke symptoms.

Each year, nearly 795,000 people in the United States suffer a stroke, which is also the fifth-leading cause of death and the leading cause of adult disability in the U.S. On average, someone suffers a stroke in the U.S. every 40 seconds. In 2020, the team at RiverBend’s Comprehensive Stroke Center treated 1,200 strokes in the local and regional area.

For more information about Sacred Heart at RiverBend’s Comprehensive Stroke Center, visit [this website](https://www.peacehealth.org/sacred-heart-riverbend/stroke-center).

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**Stroke Symptoms**

**Stroke is an emergency** and individuals experiencing it may not even be aware of their symptoms. Use the **BEFAST** acronym to recognize the signs of stroke and get help fast!

Look for sudden onset of any one of these symptoms, it could be a stroke!

* **B**alance changes
* **E**yesight changes
* **F**acial drooping
* **A**rm weakness
* **S**peech changes
* **T**ime to call 911 if any one of the above occurs