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### **CRMC Partners with University Hospital for Stroke Care**

Cortland Regional Medical Center (CRMC) has begun using telemedicine technology to further expand medical services for Cortland and the surrounding communities. The medical center has partnered with University Hospital at SUNY Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse to more quickly diagnose and treat area stroke patients.

During a stroke, blood flow – and therefore oxygen flow – to the brain is disrupted. When the brain is deprived of oxygen, even for minutes, permanent brain damage and possibly death are possible. 80% of strokes are known as ischemic strokes, which are caused by a blood clot that blocks a blood vessel or artery in the brain.

“Every minute counts when it comes to stroke response,” said Dr. David Wirtz, an emergency room physician and chair of the CRMC Stroke Committee. “Prompt access to stroke experts can mean the difference between life and death. Thanks to telemedicine and our relationship with University Hospital, we now have access to multiple neurologists and some of the most advanced stroke treatments and procedures available today.”

The new system, known as REACH (Rural Evaluation of Acute isChemic stroke), is designed to give rural hospitals (“spokes”), where the patient is located, full time access to neurologists at a designated stroke center (“hub”). Cortland Regional is one of only 16 spoke hospitals statewide to adopt REACH, and fits in with its overall strategy of exploring innovative ways to better serve its patients.

By using a web camera and secure Internet connection, a neurologist at University Hospital can see and remotely examine a patient in the CRMC Emergency Room. This real-time

connection also enables Cortland Regional staff to send vital signs, test results, CT scans and other patient information over the connection, and talk “face-to-face” with the neurologist. The neurologist then makes recommendations regarding treatment, including the use of tPA (a clot dissolving drug) when appropriate. For more serious cases, such as those that require removing a clot from the brain, the patient is immediately transferred to University Hospital where interventional radiology is used.

Through this new program, Cortland area stroke patients are being treated by some of the country’s leading stroke specialists and neurologists at University Hospital. And most importantly, these stroke patients are being treated quickly – and when it comes to stroke, every minute makes a difference.

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