

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

John Russell, Marketing Manager / Media Relations
MUSC Health Florence Division
843-674-2953
russeljo@musc.edu

MUSC Health Florence Division Brings Advanced Stroke Care Closer to Home

MUSC Florence Medical Center continues to bring advanced system of stroke care closer to the residents of the Pee Dee region despite the coronavirus pandemic.

In March, before COVID-19 reached South Carolina, MUSC Health committed itself to bring an advanced “system of stroke care” to Florence, to include neuro-critical care in the ICU and thrombectomy. The life-saving thrombectomy is a neuroendovascular procedure which removes blood clots from large blood vessels in the brain.

In August, MUSC Health Florence Medical Center opened a Neurological Intensive Care Unit (NSICU) staffed by MUSC Health Florence intensivists. This NSICU is supported by MUSC Charleston tele-neuro critical care consults and tele-rounding on NSICU inpatients.

“This NSICU brings two added benefits for our patients. First, MUSC Health Florence Medical Center is able to receive, and treat, higher acuity stroke patients. Secondly, we can offer neurosurgeons a higher level of confidence to perform more complex cases at MUSC Health Florence than ever before. All of this is a necessary step toward becoming an accredited thrombectomy-capable stroke center,” said Vance Reynolds, Chief Executive Officer, MUSC Health Florence Division.

By the end of September, MUSC Health Florence Medical Center will offer lifesaving thrombectomy procedures and continue to work toward becoming the first accredited thrombectomy-capable center in our region.

Alejandro M. Spiotta, M.D. MUSC Director of Neuroendovascular Surgery, said, “Research has demonstrated that thrombectomy, a highly specialized procedure in which physicians navigate in the arteries of the body to reach the brain arteries and open a blockage, gives patients who suffer a severe stroke a much better chance of survival. Some will recover all their stroke

symptoms immediately on the procedure table! But time is of the essence, and delays in transferring to other regions of the state lead to strokes progressing to the point where they cannot be helped. With more access to this life saving surgery directly in our Pee Dee community, stroke victims here will have the highest possible chance of recovering from their stroke.”

“Neurocritical care adds another layer of safety and acuity to an already advanced intensive care unit in MUSC Health Florence. We are committed to bringing cutting edge care here locally. We owe it to our patients, and we will not stop our pursuit of advancing care and fighting disease here locally,” said Rami Zebian, Chief Medical Officer, MUSC Health Florence Division.

"This is a community effort to improve stroke care for the residents of the Pee Dee Region," said Christine Holmstedt, DO, Associate Professor of Neurology and Emergency Medicine, MUSC Health Medical Director Comprehensive Stroke Program and Teleneuroscience Program. “Patients and families need to know the signs and symptoms of stroke and call 911 immediately. Signs and symptoms of stroke include facial drooping, weakness or numbness on one side of the body, speech that is suddenly slurred or hard to understand. We are working with Pee Dee EMS professionals on proper assessments and transportation protocols to ensure patients are taken to the appropriate facility to best treat their stroke,” she said.

Our foundation as a Primary Stroke Center with tele-stroke service, and a 24/7/365 NSICU, is why MUSC Health Florence Medical Center is the best choice for stroke care in the region. We stand ready to serve patients from around the Pee Dee region, whether native to Florence or transferred patients from surrounding facilities.

About MUSC Health

As the clinical health system of the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), MUSC Health is dedicated to delivering the highest quality patient care available, while training generations of competent, compassionate health care providers to serve the people of South Carolina and beyond. Comprising some 1,600 beds, more than 100 outreach sites, the MUSC College of Medicine, the physicians’ practice plan, and nearly 275 telehealth locations, MUSC Health owns and operates eight hospitals situated in Charleston, Chester, Florence, Lancaster and Marion counties. In 2018, for the fourth consecutive year, U.S. News & World Report named MUSC Health the number one hospital in South Carolina. To learn more about clinical patient services, visit <http://muschealth.org>.

Founded in 1824, MUSC and its affiliates have collective annual budgets of \$3 billion. The more than 17,000 MUSC team members include world-class faculty, physicians, specialty providers and scientists who deliver groundbreaking education, research, technology and patient care. For information on academic programs, visit musc.edu.

###