

# STROKE CENTER

## Treatment from Afar

Sheila Lostbourne woke up with a terrible headache.

“I thought it was a sinus headache because my eyeballs hurt,” she said. “If I moved my eyes left or right, they hurt.”

Mrs. Lostbourne, 74, of Hillsborough, took acetaminophen for the pain and went to rest on the couch. Her husband, Wayne, found her there a short while later slumped over and unresponsive.

He called 9-1-1, summoning the Hillsborough Rescue Squad. The EMTs recognized that Mrs. Lostbourne might be having a stroke. On the way to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset in Somerville on the morning of October 16th, they called the Emergency Department to alert them to a potential stroke patient. That call mobilized the hospital’s stroke team, which includes physicians and nurses specially trained in stroke care as well as staff from radiology and the laboratory. As soon as she arrived at the hospital, Mrs. Lostbourne was seen by Keith Minett, DO, an emergency medicine specialist with RWJ Somerset and he ordered a CT scan to check for clots in her brain.

Using the hospital’s new teleneurology service, a board-certified neurologist located off-site was immediately available to review Mrs. Lostbourne’s CT scan and view her via video link through a special computer in the Emergency Department. The neurologist concurred that Mrs. Lostbourne was having a stroke and recommended that she receive tissue plasminogen activator (t-PA), a clot-busting drug. If administered within the first three hours of having a stroke, t-PA can help minimize the damage of a stroke.

Mr. Lostbourne spoke to the neurologist through videoconferencing. “It was great. He was very professional and thorough in explaining the need for the drug,” he said.

Because the CT scan identified a clot in one of the arteries in her brain, Mrs. Lostbourne was transferred to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick within an hour. There, Sudipta Roychowdhury, MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Radiology at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, performed a mechanical thrombectomy, inserting a catheter to the blocked blood vessel to remove the clot. After the procedure, she was monitored by Igor Rybinnik, MD, Assistant Professor of Neurology at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

The next day, Mrs. Lostbourne was sitting up in bed, calling friends and family throughout the country.

“This was a picture perfect case showing how timely diagnosis and prompt treatment can improve the outcomes for stroke patients,” said Judy Lane, Director of Neuroscience at RWJ New Brunswick and Somerset.

Mrs. Lostbourne left the hospital four days after her surgery and went to a sub-acute rehabilitation center for two and a half weeks for physical and occupational therapy and continues outpatient rehabilitation after returning home.

Motivated by the lyrics from the song “Try” by Pink, Mrs. Lostbourne has been doggedly determined to

regain full strength and mobility in her left arm and leg, which were affected by the stroke.

Mrs. Lostbourne, who uses a wheelchair and walker to get around, enjoyed cooking her husband’s favorite chili this winter and getting out to the movies. By this summer, the grandmother of three hopes to be able to see concerts at the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel, where she saw Rascal Flatts last year.

“I’m in this to win it,” she said

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