

Community Hospital Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Simcoe Muskoka Acute Stroke Protocol?

The objective of the protocol is to quickly assess and transport eligible stroke patients to the closest and most appropriate hospital for assessment and consideration of hyperacute stroke therapy (e.g. thrombolytic therapy –tPA, endovascular therapy - EVT). The protocol was developed in collaboration with the Simcoe Muskoka Hospitals, Ambulance Services, the Central East Stroke Network, and the Toronto EVT delivery sites (You may also refer to the **Simcoe Muskoka Acute Stroke Protocol Algorithm and the Acute Stroke Emergency Transfer Protocol.**)

2. What region is covered under this protocol?

The protocol governs the dispatch response within Simcoe Muskoka as well as Alliston and a small section of West Parry Sound and Northwest Haliburton.

3. When did the Simcoe Muskoka Acute Stroke Protocol begin?

The protocol was initially established in 2006 and is updated regularly when new evidence emerges and to align with the Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations.

4. What changes have been made/ what is new to the protocol?

- i. **Emergency Department care** [The Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Update 2018]
The treatment window for EVT was expanded. This means select patients presenting to community (non tPA) hospitals by ambulance or as “walk-ins” 4-24 hours post stroke onset may still be eligible for EVT.
- ii. **Initial ED Evaluation** All patients with suspected ischemic stroke who arrive within 4-24 hours of stroke symptom onset should be screened using a validated Large Vessel Occlusion Screening Tool (LVO) (e.g. ACT FAST).
- iii. **Neurovascular Imaging Hospitals** Patients with a probable large vessel occlusion (LVO) stroke based on ACT FAST screening tool, should undergo immediate brain imaging (target within 15 minutes) as per the provincial CT/mCTA imaging protocol (non-contrast CT, immediately followed by multiphase CT angiography).
- iv. **EVT Consult via CritiCall Ontario.** If patients have met the **EVT eligibility criteria** as per the - Simcoe Muskoka Acute Stroke Emergency Transfer Protocol, **referring physicians shall contact CritiCall Ontario** to facilitate stroke consultation by **requesting the ‘Stroke Endovascular Team’**. **CritiCall Ontario will connect Simcoe Muskoka sites with an EVT delivery site** in Toronto (i.e. St. Michael’s Hospital, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, or University Health Network). **If patient is accepted as an EVT candidate a confirmation of Life or Limb status is indicated.**

5. What to do with “Walk-Ins” (patient who does not access EMS)?

Please see ‘Acute Stroke Emergency Transfer Protocol’. There are now two parts to this protocol:

- i. Patients that present within **4 hours** of stroke symptom onset: Patients will be assessed by their local hospital as candidates for Hyperacute Stroke Therapy (tPA/EVT) and transported to the closest, most appropriate Stroke Centre Emergency Department (i.e. Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) or Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare – Huntsville Memorial District Hospital (HDMH) Code 4 CTAS level 2 (page one of the protocol).
- ii. Patients that present within **4-24 hours** from stroke symptom onset – Complete steps 1 and 2 of the ACT FAST Screen assessing for one-sided arm weakness, language deficit, gaze preference or hemi-neglect performed by health care providers (e.g. Registered Nurses) followed by the remainder of the eligibility screening for EVT performed by physician, including rapid assessment, NIHSS and immediate brain imaging (page 2 of the protocol)

6. Where are these patients transported?

- i. Patients who accessed EMS - **EMS will continue to by-pass** their community hospital and transport appropriate patients with stroke symptom onset within 6 hours directly to the closest Stroke Centre Emergency Department (i.e. RVH or HDMH) for Hyperacute Stroke Therapy (tPA/EVT).
- ii. Patients that present to community hospitals within **4 hours** of stroke symptom onset - Patients will be transported to closest, most appropriate Stroke Centre Emergency Department (i.e. RVH or MAHC) for Hyperacute Stroke Therapy (tPA/EVT).
- iii. **Patients that present** to community hospitals **within 4-24 hours** from stroke symptom onset or last known to be well: **referring physicians shall contact CritiCall Ontario** to facilitate stroke consultation by **requesting the ‘Stroke Endovascular Team’**. **CritiCall Ontario will connect Simcoe Muskoka sites with an EVT delivery site** in Toronto (i.e. St. Michael’s Hospital, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, or University Health Network). **If patient is accepted as an EVT candidate a confirmation of Life or Limb status is indicated.**

7. What happens to patients who do not receive Hyperacute Stroke Therapy (tPA/EVT)?

Patients who no longer require specialized resources at the designated stroke hospitals will be transferred to appropriate care closer to home based on care needs.

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8. **What happens to patients who receive tPA?** Medically stable patients will be transferred to their community hospital inpatient unit within 24-48 hours of receiving tPA.

9. **What happens to patients who receive EVT?**

Patients who receive EVT will follow the Life and Limb Policy and be repatriated when deemed medically stable and suitable for transfer within a best effort window of 48 hours to the referring hospital or hospital closest to the patient's home that can provide the clinical service required. It has been determined that the clinical services required for EVT patients are delivered on an acute stroke unit. Currently in Simcoe Muskoka, Orillia Soldiers Memorial Hospital and RVH provide acute stroke unit care for EVT patients.

10. **If one of my patients, already an in-patient, exhibits signs or symptoms of a stroke, what should I do? Will they be eligible for this protocol?**

Report your observations to the Most Responsible Physician. Share your knowledge of the Simcoe Muskoka Acute Stroke Protocol. Your Emergency Department staff is an excellent resource. All Emergency Departments in Simcoe/Muskoka have a copy of the Acute Stroke Emergency Transfer Protocol. This protocol directs the management of patients who are already inpatients at a Community Hospital.

11. Where do I find additional resources?

[4-24hr EVT Toolkit - Central East Stroke Network \(cesnstroke.ca\)](http://cesnstroke.ca)

12. **Where can I find out more about this protocol within my organization?**

Further information is available by contacting the following:

Hospital	Position	Phone Number
Collingwood General and Marine Hospital	Nurse Manager ED	705-444-8631
Georgian Bay General Hospital	Prof. Practice Leader/Nurse Clinician	705-526-1300 ext 5334/5335
Haliburton Highlands Health Services	Manager of Acute Care and ED	705-457-1392 ext 2223
Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, South Muskoka Memorial Site	District Stroke Coordinator	705-789-2311 ext 2510
Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, Huntsville District Memorial Site	District Stroke Coordinator	705-789-2311 ext 2510
Orillia Soldier's Memorial Hospital	Program Manager, Medicine and Rehab	705-325-2201 ext 3463
Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre, Barrie	Regional Program Director	705-728-9090 ext 46312
Stevenson Memorial Hospital, Alliston	Clinical Coordinator ED	705-435-6281 ext 2219
West Parry Sound Health Centre	ED Manager	746-746-4540 ext 2430

13. **Who do I contact regarding Bed Allocation Issues?**

Further information is available by contacting the following:

Hospital	Position	Phone Number
Collingwood General and Marine Hospital	Bed Allocations	Mon-Fri 8-4: 705-444-8642 After hours: 705-445-2550 ext 8266
Georgian Bay General Hospital, Midland Site	Registration Supervisor	705-526-1300 ext 5170
Haliburton Highlands Health Services	Manager of Acute Care and ED	705-457-1392 ext 2223
Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, South Muskoka Memorial Site	Bed Allocation	Mon-Fri 0730-1530:705-706-2942 or ext 2807 After hours and Weekends: 705-706-1986
Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, Huntsville District Memorial Site	Bed Allocation	Mon-Fri 0730-1530:705-706-2942 or ext 2807 After hours and Weekends: 705-706-0951
Orillia Soldier's Memorial Hospital	Bed Allocation	705-325-2201
Royal Victoria Health Centre, Barrie	Bed Allocation	705-728-9090 ext 46031
Stevenson Memorial Hospital, Alliston	Clinical Coordinator Medicine	705-435-6281 ext 2315
West Parry Sound Health Centre	Clinical Care Coordinator	705-938-0283

14. **How can I communicate my questions, comments, concerns?**

You can share comments with the people listed above or by calling the District Stroke office directly, at:

Central East Stroke Network Regional Director 705-728-9090 ext 46300
Muskoka District Stroke Coordinator 705-789-2311 ext 2510