



Barrow, Phoenix Fire Announce Partnership Revolutionizing Stroke Treatment

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Barrow Neurological Institute and the Phoenix Fire Department today announced a new partnership that will revolutionize the way many [stroke](#) victims in Phoenix receive medical treatment. The collaboration is expected to dramatically speed the process in which strokes are diagnosed and treated, greatly reducing death and long-term disability in stroke victims.

The program centers around a state-of-the-art mobile emergency room focused on treating stroke victims. The Barrow Emergency Stroke Treatment Unit, which looks like a large emergency service vehicle, is owned and operated by Barrow. The mobile stroke unit is currently one of 10 in the nation and is the first in the United States to operate around the clock in a city with a population greater than 1 million.

“Because we know that fast treatment can greatly reduce the effects of stroke, we’ve adopted this new method to change the way stroke victims are treated,” says [Michael Waters, MD, PhD](#), director of the [stroke program](#) at Barrow Neurological Institute. “By deploying a mobile emergency room that includes the latest technology and medical expertise, we will be able to treat stroke patients much quicker than traditional methods. This enables us to take the next step in providing our community with the most advanced stroke care.”

Phoenix Fire Chief Kara Kalkbrenner says this represents an important step in the collaboration between emergency responders and the medical community.

“This is one additional way emergency response systems and the medical community are working together to continue to provide the most advanced care and support to Phoenix residents,” says Kara Kalkbrenner, Phoenix Fire Chief. “Barrow and Phoenix Fire both have unique positions and skill sets and this partnership is bringing those traits together to improve the health and well-being of our community.”

Current national stroke treatment statistics are staggering. While the probability of a stroke victim having a good outcome is reduced 10 percent every 30 minutes until blood flow to the brain is re-established, currently less than 6 percent of individuals receive the necessary treatment needed within the 4.5 hour recommended timeframe after symptoms begin. Less than one percent of stroke patients receive treatment within one hour.

“These statistics are very frustrating for the medical community,” says Dr. Waters. “With the addition of the mobile stroke unit along with the great support from the Phoenix Fire Department and the City of Phoenix, we will be able to help combat these statistics and effectively improve stroke outcomes in our community.”

The Barrow Emergency Stroke Treatment Unit will be deployed along with Phoenix Fire through the 911 system in instances where there is a possible stroke diagnosis. The unit is equipped with the most advanced diagnostic tools to determine what type of stroke the patient is experiencing so that faster diagnosis and treatment can be made. It also includes live telemedicine capabilities to connect with a Barrow stroke physician. A stroke-certified RN and a CT technician from Barrow will always be on board.



Dr. Michael Waters, director of the Stroke Program at Barrow, addresses the crowd at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Barrow Emergency Stroke Treatment Unit.



Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton tours the Barrow Emergency Stroke Treatment Unit.

Center. With a response radius of 20 minutes, the unit will be able to reach the curbside of about half the stroke patients in the greater Phoenix area.

The cost of the mobile unit was \$1-million and was funded by philanthropy, including gifts from the Thunderbirds Charities, the Board of Visitors, Barrow Beyond, and other individual donors. The stroke research that will be conducted by Dr. Waters and his team at Barrow will be funded in part by the Women’s Board of Barrow Neurological Foundation.

The Barrow Emergency Stroke Treatment Unit, which was approved by Phoenix City Council last month, is expected to begin operating in July.

Barrow Emergency Stroke Treatment Unit Overview and Statistics

- The Barrow Emergency Stroke Treatment Unit is a specially equipped and staffed mobile emergency unit that will provide early diagnosis and treatment to many Phoenix stroke victims before they arrive at the hospital.
- The program will dramatically speed the process in which strokes are diagnosed and treated, greatly reducing death and long-term disability in stroke victims.

“We’ve designed the mobile unit in a way that enables the medical team to evaluate, diagnose, and start treatment on the patient before the patient arrives at the hospital,” says Dr. Waters.

The Barrow Emergency Stroke Treatment Unit will be housed at Barrow, which is part of Dignity Health St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical

- Barrow anticipates the mobile stroke unit will respond to approximately 1,500 calls annually.
- The stroke treatment unit will be housed at Barrow, which is located at Dignity Health St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center.
- With a response radius of 20 minutes, the unit will be able to reach the curbside of about half the stroke patients in the greater Phoenix area.
- To date, there are less than 10 active mobile stroke units throughout the United States.
- The Barrow Emergency Stroke Treatment Unit will be the first of its kind in the U.S. that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year in a city with a population greater than 1 million.
- The unit is 26-feet long, 10 feet wide, and 12 feet tall. It weighs 22,500 pounds (11 tons).
- More than 800,000 strokes occur annually in the U.S. Of those, approximately 8,000 occur in Maricopa County.
- Barrow Neurological Institute's Stroke Program is one of the most experienced and expert stroke programs in the country, caring for more stroke survivors than any other center in the southwest.

B-roll is available [here](#).

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About Barrow

Since our doors opened as a regional specialty center in 1962, we have grown into one of the premiere destinations in the world for neurology and neurosurgery. Our experienced, highly skilled, and comprehensive team of neurological specialists can provide you with a complete spectrum of care—from diagnosis through outpatient neurorehabilitation—under one roof. Barrow Neurological Institute: **Discover. Educate. Heal.**

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