



Novant Health Forsyth Medical Center

Case Study

“With StrokeSense we can achieve our mission of improving the health of our community one person at a time.”

Bill Evans, Director of Marketing, Novant Health Forsyth Medical Center

The Challenge

Novant Health’s Forsyth Medical Center is an 847-bed tertiary care hospital in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Like most hospitals, they thought they were doing a fairly good job of caring for stroke patients. “StrokeSense provided the tools and methodology to evaluate the needs of the community as well as benchmark the hospital’s current practices,” said Chere M. Chase, MD.

When the hospital completed the StrokeSense program’s performance benchmarking process, they learned there were significant opportunities to enhance processes and improve outcomes.

The stroke team at Forsyth analyzed the results measure by measure, according to program champion Lynn Stevens, RN. “We asked ourselves if we were happy with the results, why the results were the way they were and if we needed to put any improvement initiatives into place,” Stevens said.



Forsyth MEDICAL CENTER

The Solution

The team at Novant used StrokeSense to develop a comprehensive stroke program addressing clinical care delivery and clinical process improvement as well as community education and outreach. Jim Tobalski, senior vice president, credits StrokeSense with providing the momentum to improve care for stroke patients. “When you are able to bring together nurses, physicians, quality management, marketing, educators and further develop a program like this, good things begin to happen,” he said.

A coordinated, multifunctional response is critical because stroke and neurologic disease patients often use a spectrum of services, including emergency, ICU, neurology, and rehabilitation. “StrokeSense provided that whole-system, comprehensive approach,” said Lynn Stevens. “We realized, for example, that DVT prophylaxis is not only good for stroke patients, but for all patients. The stroke clinical pathway was used as a model for developing pathways for other types of patients.”

The Results

Some of the key improvements Novant Health realized by coordinating services and departments through the StrokeSense program include:

- 13.8 percent improvement in mortality rate for ischemic stroke patients
- 8.1 percent improvement in average length of stay for ischemic stroke patients
- 12.6 percent improvement in percentage of ischemic stroke patients discharged to home
- 36.3 percent improvement in percentage of stroke patients receiving DVT prophylaxis

The health system received a \$645,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to further reduce the high rates of stroke that disproportionately occur in the southern “stroke belt.” Forsyth was also among the first in the state to receive Stroke Center Certification from JCAHO.

“Imagine the situation of trying to piece together all of the needs and processes of stroke care across a large system,” said Aristides E. Chaconas, MD. “With StrokeSense, it’s a dynamic process and people are happy to be a part of it.”