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## UC San Diego Health Recognized for Outstanding Stroke Care

**American Heart Association honors hospitals that adhere to national stroke guidelines to improve patient outcomes**

Rapid treatment is crucial when treating a stroke because, during an event, as many as 2 million neurons may die with each passing minute. Lifesaving interventions administered quickly and effectively not only save lives but also limit disabilities associated with the condition. A recent data analysis conducted by the American Heart Association (AHA) showed that the Comprehensive Stroke Centers at UC San Diego Health exceeded national average treatment times and, as a result, UC San Diego Health received Gold Plus Achievement status and the Honor Roll Elite Plus award for stroke care.

These awards are bestowed to hospitals that comply and institutionalize the AHA's "Get With The Guidelines®" stroke program. UC San Diego Health is part of a group of hospitals recognized for their commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care that ensures patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines and recommendations.

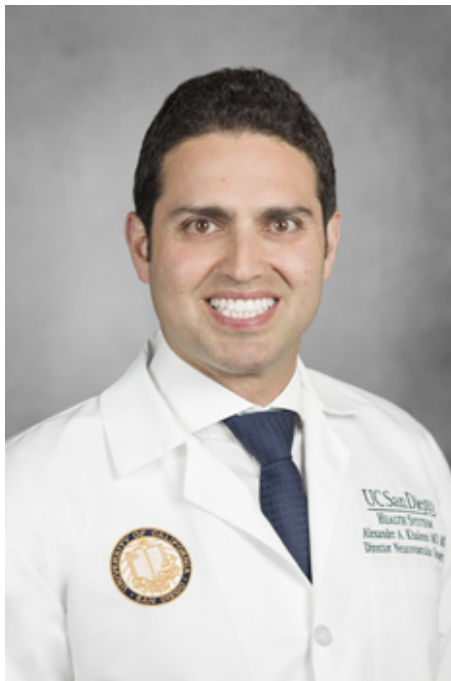
"In order to be recognized for these awards, you must have a team of highly trained emergency department staff, neurologists, radiologists and endovascular surgeons available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year," said Thomas Hemmen, MD, PhD, director of stroke neurology at UC San Diego Health and associate professor of neurosciences at UC San Diego School of Medicine. "The coordination and collaboration of this team is what leads to our quick response time and better patient outcomes."



*Thomas Hemmen, MD, PhD, director of stroke neurology at UC San Diego Health and associate professor of neurosciences at UC San Diego School of Medicine.*

“This award demonstrates the expertise, dedication and depth of stroke care at UC San Diego Health. I know our interdisciplinary team is leading the future of stroke care in the hospital and laboratory,” added Alexander Khalessi, MD, director of neurovascular surgery and chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at UC San Diego Health.

A stroke occurs when either blood flow to a region of the brain is disrupted (ischemic stroke) or a blood vessel in the brain ruptures (hemorrhagic stroke). In either type of stroke, fast and correct diagnosis and treatment is essential to reduce impairment and save lives.



*Alexander Khalessi, MD, director of neurovascular surgery and chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at UC San Diego Health.*

“Speed and consistency is why we succeed at providing patients with the best possible outcomes after a stroke. Every minute stroke treatment is prolonged, the likelihood of a full recovery declines,” said Hemmen.

For UC San Diego Health to achieve the Honor Roll-Elite Plus award, data must prove that 75 percent or more of acute ischemic stroke patients are treated with intravenous tissue plasminogen activator within one hour and time to thrombolytic therapy is within 45 minutes in 50 percent of patients. The Gold Plus award indicates that UC San Diego Health’s Comprehensive Stroke Centers have been achieving these measures for 24 consecutive months or more.

“Stroke care at UC San Diego Health is system-wide through our two comprehensive stroke centers,” Hemmen said. “This award illustrates that an independent organization also sees the value in our approach to care.”

In 2012, UC San Diego Medical Center received its first designation as a Comprehensive Stroke Center. At the time, it was one of the first five facilities in the nation to be so designated, and the only one in San Diego County. Six years later, Jacobs Medical Center at UC San Diego Health in La Jolla was also designated as a Comprehensive Stroke Center.

Every year, more than 5,000 San Diegans arrive to a hospital after suffering an apparent stroke. In 2016, stroke was the fifth leading cause of death in the United States, with 795,000 Americans experiencing some form of stroke, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To learn more about the comprehensive stroke centers at UC San Diego Health, please visit [health.ucsd.edu/stroke](https://health.ucsd.edu/stroke)

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