

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2013

Contact: Robyn Thaw (650) 867-1661

San Mateo County Health System

San Mateo County Launches a New System of Care for STEMI – The Most Dangerous Type of Heart Attack

SAN MATEO, Calif. – San Mateo County Health System and the Hospital Consortium of San Mateo County announced today a new system of cardiac care for the most serious type of heart attack called a ST-Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI). The San Mateo County STEMI Program is intended to ensure heart attack patients receive the highest standard of cardiac care. This coordinated effort results in a more rapid time to treatment for this most serious form of myocardial infarction or heart attack.

The new STEMI system begins when 911 is called. Paramedics are rapidly sent to the patient's side and can begin treatment. They obtain and transmit a heart tracing (EKG), give life saving medications, and, when appropriate, transport patients directly to hospitals designated as STEMI Receiving Centers (SRCs). The SRC can provide specialized cardiac care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Quickly identifying a patient's condition and transmitting the EKG before the patient arrives allows the hospital to activate a specialized cardiac care team sooner.

“It is important to call 911 when anyone has symptoms suggestive of heart attack. This includes chest pain or discomfort that may or may not be accompanied by sweating, shortness of breath, nausea or discomfort radiating to the shoulders or jaw”, states Dr. Gregory Gilbert, the San Mateo County Emergency Medical Services Agency Medical Director. “When a STEMI is present, time is heart muscle and treatment can begin when 911 is called and paramedics arrive on scene. Studies have demonstrated that when a STEMI system is in place, patients have their symptoms relieved quicker, experience less heart damage and have better long term outcomes and quality of life”.

Francine Serafin-Dickson, the executive director of the Hospital Consortium states, “This program involves a finely coordinated team effort of EMS, nurses, physicians, pharmacists, medical and lab technicians, and administration dedicated to getting the patient treated as quickly as possible. All the hospitals in San Mateo County and Stanford Hospital have been involved in planning for this specialized system of cardiac care for over a year.” The San Mateo County EMS Agency has designated the following hospitals as STEMI Centers: Seton Medical Center, Mills Peninsula Hospital, Kaiser Redwood City Hospital, Sequoia Hospital and Stanford Hospital based on standards developed by experts in the cardiac care.

The best treatment for a heart attack is to try and prevent one from happening. Taking steps to lower the risk of a heart attack can include, controlling blood pressure, avoiding tobacco use, maintaining a healthy weight, lowering cholesterol levels, exercise, and people with diabetes striving for good sugar control.