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**CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER'S STROKE PROGRAM AWARDED
JOINT COMMISSION CERTIFICATION AS A PRIMARY STROKE CENTER**

With one of the largest, most comprehensive stroke programs in Southern California, Cedars-Sinai receives referrals of some of the most challenging cases

LOS ANGELES (Oct. 10, 2008) –Cedars-Sinai Medical Center's Stroke Program has been certified as a Primary Stroke Center by The Joint Commission, the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care.

This distinction, awarded to centers that pass a rigorous on-site review and a thorough examination of program and patient-care data, recognizes a center's commitment to following national standards and guidelines that can significantly improve outcomes for stroke patients. Certification criteria were developed in collaboration with the American Stroke Association and based on the Brain Attack Coalition's "Recommendations for the Establishment of Primary Stroke Centers."

Cedars-Sinai's Stroke Program previously received the American Stroke Association's Gold Award for success in using the "Get With The Guidelines – Stroke" program – an award given to centers that have maintained high performance levels for two years or more. The Cedars-Sinai program offers the expertise of nationally recognized physicians and surgeons, specialized and emergency care that is available around the clock, and the innovative diagnostic and treatment tools of the largest private, non-profit hospital in California.

"Achieving Primary Stroke Center certification is the result of a concerted effort among a very large team of professionals committed to improving every aspect of stroke care, including prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, research, community outreach and patient support," said David Palestrant, M.D., director of Neuro-Critical Care and the Stroke Program at Cedars-Sinai.

The program draws on the expertise of neurologists, endovascular and vascular neurosurgeons, vascular surgeons, neurointensivists, stroke neurologists, interventional neuroradiologists, psychiatrists, rehabilitation specialists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, social workers, dietitians, pharmacists, nurses and a stroke nurse specialist.

Like other stroke experts, Palestrant and his colleagues urge people to become familiar with the symptoms of stroke – and to waste no time getting to a specialized center if onset of stroke is suspected.

"Stroke is the third leading cause of death and the number one cause of adult disability, he said. "Injury to the brain and resulting disabilities can be reduced or reversed if strokes are treated quickly. Recent studies suggest that early intervention can improve outcomes by about 30 percent."

(more)

Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve the safety and quality of care provided to the public through the provision of health care accreditation and related services that support performance improvement in health care organizations. The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits more than 15,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including more than 8,000 hospitals and home care organizations, and more than 6,800 other health care organizations that provide long term care, assisted living, behavioral health care, laboratory and ambulatory care services.

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