According to the American Heart Association, about 5.7 million people suffer from heart failure. Statistics also show that, each year, 670,000 new cases are diagnosed and more than 277,000 people will die of heart failure.

CLEVELAND— The Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center (Cleveland VAMC) has received the Get With The Guidelines ®-Heart Failure Silver Plus Quality Achievement Award from the American Heart Association. The recognition signifies that Cleveland VAMC has reached impressive benchmarks in the evidence-based treatment of heart failure patients.

Specifically, hospitals awarded the Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure Silver Plus Quality Achievement Award have accomplished at least 12 consecutive months of 85 percent or higher adherence to all Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure Quality Achievement indicators and at least 12 consecutive months of 75 percent or higher compliance with four of nine Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure Quality Measures for the same reporting period, which are reporting initiatives to measure and improve quality of patient care and outcomes.

Get With The Guidelines is a quality improvement initiative that provides healthcare providers with tools that follow proven evidence-based guidelines and procedures in caring for heart failure patients to improve outcomes, prevent future hospitalizations, and prolong lives.

Using Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure treatment guidelines, heart failure patients are started on aggressive risk-reduction therapies, such as cholesterol-lowering drugs, beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, aspirin, diuretics and anticoagulants in the hospital. They also receive alcohol/drug use and thyroid management counseling as well as referrals for cardiac rehabilitation before being discharged.

“The full implementation of national heart failure guideline recommended care is a critical step in preventing recurrent hospitalizations, prolonging and improving the lives of heart failure patients,” said Lee H. Schwamm, M.D., chair of the Get With The Guidelines National Steering Committee and director of the TeleStroke and Acute Stroke Services at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. “The goal of the American Heart Association’s Get With The Guidelines program is to help hospitals like the Cleveland VAMC implement appropriate evidence-based care and protocols that will reduce disability and the number of deaths in these patients Published scientific studies are providing us with more and more evidence that Get With The Guidelines works. Patients are getting the right care they need when they need it. That’s resulting in improved survival.”

“The Cleveland VA Medical Center is dedicated to being among the best hospitals in the country in the care of heart failure patients,” said Ashley Trimble, hospital spokesperson. “This recognition demonstrates that we are on the right track and will continue with aggressive implementation of the American Heart Association’s Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure program.”

Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure helps Cleveland VAMC’s staff develop and implement acute and secondary prevention guideline processes. The program provides hospitals with a web-based patient management tool, decision support, robust registry, real-time benchmarking capabilities and other performance improvement methodologies toward the goal of enhancing patient outcomes and saving lives.

This high-tech, evidence-based approach enables Cleveland VAMC to improve the quality of care it provides heart failure patients, save lives and ultimately, reduce healthcare costs by avoiding re-hospitalization.

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About Cleveland VAMC

Cleveland VAMC provides both inpatient and outpatient health care services at its facility located in Cleveland (Wade Park) as well as 13 Community Based Outpatient Clinics within Northeast Ohio. The Wade Park Campus is classified as a Level 1 (the most complex) type of medical facility because of the range of available services. It is a teaching hospital with full service patient care, as well as education & research centers.

About Get With The Guidelines

Get With The Guidelines® is the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's hospital-based quality improvement program that empowers healthcare teams to save lives and reduce healthcare costs by helping hospitals follow evidence-based guidelines and recommendations. For more information, visit **heart.org/quality** .