



HEALTH AWARENESS

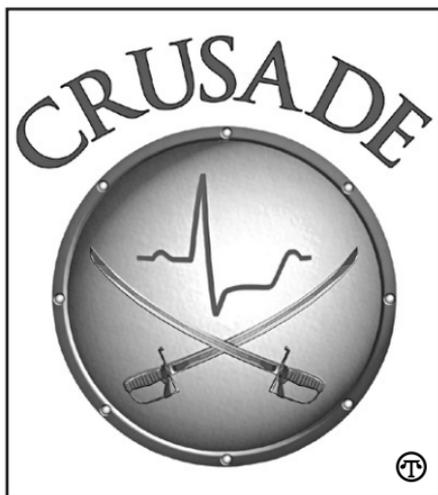
Patients Fare Better At Hospitals That Follow Guidelines

(NAPSA)—According to data released recently at a major medical meeting, patients with chest pain do better when they arrive at hospital emergency departments that use recommended treatment guidelines. The guidelines, created by the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association (ACC/AHA), have been shown to save lives.

The data is part of an initiative called CRUSADE, which is designed to help hospitals improve their care of patients with potentially serious chest pain. Conducted by Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI), the initiative is measuring adherence to the ACC/AHA guidelines for patients who arrive in the emergency department with chest pain and symptoms that place them at risk for heart attack or death. As the data are collected, educational programs are being put into place to help hospitals better follow the guidelines. At the time the data was presented, CRUSADE had looked at nearly 28,000 patients treated at more than 300 U.S. hospitals.

“Our analysis of ‘real world’ practices confirms that following the ACC/AHA guidelines, which recommend early and aggressive treatment of patients at high-risk, has the potential to save thousands of lives each year,” said Eric Peterson, M.D., associate professor of medicine at Duke University Medical Center and principal investigator for the CRUSADE initiative. “Our mission is to not only document guidelines nonadherence but to actually change the behavior of healthcare professionals and help patients.”

Results showed that in-hospital deaths were reduced by 46 percent when doctors followed the treatment guidelines, which rec-



ommend the use of a class of antiplatelet drugs called glycoprotein (GP) IIb-IIIa inhibitors within the first 24 hours of hospitalization. However, only 31 percent of eligible patients received these drugs within 24 hours. In addition, the data showed that patients did not routinely receive a recommended procedure called diagnostic catheterization, which was shown to improve patient outcomes and to reduce the amount of time a patient spends in the hospital by a full day.

CRUSADE will analyze patterns for patients with chest pain at up to 600 hospitals across the United States. To date, DCRI has collected and analyzed the data and compared the treatments that patients receive with the recommended treatment guidelines. As a result, they've created a “report card” to see how participating hospitals compare. Educational materials are also provided upon request to participating hospitals to encourage better guidelines adherence and improve patient care. This initiative is being funded by Millennium Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and Schering Plough Corporation.