

8th Annual Nursing & APP Stroke Symposium
*Stroke Care in Action: From Door to Recovery: Rapid
Decisions, Advanced Imaging, and Real-World Stroke
Management*

Thursday, May 21, 2026

7:30 am - 4:30 pm

Pines Manor, Edison, NJ

CE Accredited Live In-Person Activity

Jointly Provided by

RWJBarnabas Health Stroke Collaborative

and

Rutgers Health



To Register: <https://rutgers.cloud-cme.com/8RWJBHStroke>



Overview

Stroke care is evolving rapidly as new evidence, technologies, and clinical guidelines reshape how patients are triaged, treated, and monitored across the continuum of care. Advanced practice providers and nurses play a critical role in early stroke recognition, emergency triage, acute management, and patient education. However, translating advances in stroke science into consistent clinical practice remains challenging.

This symposium is designed to provide frontline clinicians with practical, evidence-based education on current stroke care, including rapid triage strategies, extended treatment windows, neuroimaging interpretation, blood pressure management, pharmacologic therapies, and secondary prevention. Guided by recommendations from the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association, this multidisciplinary program will address common clinical challenges encountered by advanced practice providers and nurses caring for patients with suspected or confirmed stroke.

Through expert presentations, case-based discussions, and interactive sessions, participants will learn how to recognize stroke symptoms quickly, apply current treatment guidelines, interpret neuroimaging findings, and implement best practices for acute stroke management and prevention of recurrent events. The program will also explore emerging topics including stroke in younger patients, management of subarachnoid hemorrhage complications, neurologic mimics such as migraine, and quality metrics that drive improvements in stroke care delivery.

By participating in this program, clinicians will strengthen their ability to deliver timely, guideline-directed stroke care, improve patient education and secondary prevention efforts, and contribute to quality improvement initiatives within their institutions. Ultimately, this education aims to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and improve outcomes for patients affected by stroke.

Target Audience

This activity is designed for registered nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician associates/physician assistants involved in the acute management and ongoing care of patients with stroke across emergency, inpatient, and critical care settings. The program is particularly relevant for clinicians practicing in emergency departments, stroke units, neurocritical care units, intensive care units, neurology services, and primary or comprehensive stroke centers, where rapid recognition, triage, and evidence-based treatment decisions are essential.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this activity, participants should be better able to:

- Describe current stroke triage protocols and systems of care, including DIDO strategies and criteria for transfer to advanced stroke centers.
- Interpret key neuroimaging findings used to identify patients eligible for reperfusion therapies in standard and extended treatment windows.
- Apply evidence-based guidelines for blood pressure management and acute pharmacologic therapy in patients with ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke.
- Differentiate stroke from common neurologic mimics, including migraine and headache syndromes, in hyperacute clinical settings.
- Implement guideline-directed antiplatelet and secondary prevention strategies for patients following stroke or transient ischemic attack.
- Develop effective patient education strategies to improve stroke prevention, medication adherence, and recognition of stroke symptoms.
- Integrate stroke quality metrics and performance improvement strategies into clinical practice to enhance stroke care delivery.

Agenda

- 7:30 am *Registration/Continental Breakfast Exhibits*
- 7:50 am Welcome Laura Smith MSN, RN, CNRN
AM Session: Moderator: Laura Smith MSN, RN, CNRN
- 8:00 am **From Arrival to Activation: Nursing Impact in Stroke Triage**
..... Jennifer Read, BSN, RN and Alyson Bryson, BSN, RN
- 8:30 am **Pressure Matters: Evidence-Based Blood Pressure Management in Acute Stroke**
..... Amanda Leibowitz, MSN, AGPCNP, SCRNP
- 9:00 am **Beyond the Clock: Extending the Window for IV Thrombolytics** Igor Rybinnik, MD
- 9:30 am Q&A
- 9:45 am *Break/Exhibits*
- 9:55 am **Commit to Sit: Sit, Listen, Act – Improving Nursing Communication in Neurological Patients**..... Jennifer Lettieri, MSN, RN, CCRN, SCRNP
- 10:25 am **When Stroke Strikes the Young: Recognizing and Managing Stroke in Young Adults**
..... Merritt W. Brown, MD
- 10:55 am **Reading the Brain: Practical Neuroimaging for Stroke Diagnosis and Treatment Decisions**
..... Viktoriya Laznik, SCRNP, FNP-C
- 11:25 am **From Checkboxes to Real Impact: Rethinking Stroke Patient Education**
..... Kimberly Hollender, MSN, RN, ACNP-BC, ANVP
- 11:55 am Q&A
- 12:05 pm *Lunch/Exhibits*
PM Session: Moderator: Alyson Bryson, BSN, RN
- 1:05 pm **Antiplatelet Therapy in Stroke Care: Practical Insights for Confident Nursing Practice**
..... Danielle Nascondiglio, DO
- 1:35 pm **Brain on the Rocks: Hyponatremia in Stroke** Kristie Varghese, PA-C
- 2:05 pm **Stroke or Something Else? Managing Hyperacute Headache and Migraine in the Emergency Setting** Gurdeep Ahluwalia, MD
- 2:35 pm Q&A
- 2:50 pm *Break*
- 3:10 pm **The Invisible Side of Stroke – Visual Defects and Neglect**
..... Dianne Gue, OTR
- 3:40 pm **Stroke Care Showdown: Interactive Case Challenges in Quality Metrics and Best Practices**
..... Catherine Galgano, BSN, RN, CCRN,
Sandra Haas, BSN, RN, CBN, and Laura Smith, MSN, RN, CNRN
- 4:10 pm Q&A
- 4:20 pm Closing Remarks
- 4:30 pm *Adjourn*

Faculty

Gurdeep Ahluwalia, MD, Neurologist, Jersey City Medical Center

Merritt W. Brown, MD, Medical Director, Neuroendovascular Section, RWJBarnabas Health; Stroke Medical Director, Community Medical Center; Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Alyson Bryson, BSN, RN, Disease Management Coordinator, Certified Stroke Center, Monmouth Medical Center

Catherine Galgano, BSN, RN, CCRN, Stroke Coordinator, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital New Brunswick

Dianne Gue, OTR, Occupational Therapist, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital New Brunswick

Sandra Haas, BSN, RN, CBN, Bariatric Coordinator and Stroke Coordinator, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton

Kimberly Hollender, MSN, RN, ACNP-BC, ASC-BC, Neuroscience Manager, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital New Brunswick

Viktoryia Laznik, SCRn, FNP-C, Lead Nurse Practitioner, Comprehensive Stroke Center, Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center

Amanda Leibowitz, MSN, AGPCNP, SCRn, Neuroscience Nurse Practitioner, Community Medical Center

Jennifer Lettieri, MSN, RN, CCRN, SCRn, Director of Nursing, Neuroscience, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset

Danielle Nascondiglio, DO, Vascular Neurology Fellow, Department of Neurology, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Jennifer Read, BSN, RN, Rapid Response Nurse, Monmouth Medical Center

Igor Rybinnik, MD, Associate Professor of Neurology, Division of Stroke and Neurocritical Care, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Laura Smith, MSN, RN, CNRN, Neuroscience Program Manager, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset

Kristie Varghese, PA-C, Physician Associate, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital

Planners

RWJBarnabas Health

Alyson Bryson, BSN, RN

Florence Chukwuneke, RN, AGPCNP-BC, CNRN, NVRN-BC

Alice Edwards, PA-C, MHCM

Adam Ganzman, MSN, RN, APN-BC, ANVP-BC SCRn, EMT-B

Sandra Haas, BSN, RN, CBN

Kimberly Hollender, MSN, RN, ACNP-BC, ANVP

Viktoryia Laznik, SCRn, FNP-C

Alyssa Panayi, BSN, RN-BC

Tiffani Pereira, BSN, RN, SCRn

Laura Smith, MSN, RN, CNRN

Morgan Sypniewski, BSN, RN, EMT

The relevant financial relationships of all individuals who affect the content of continuing education activities and any discussion of off-label/investigational uses will be disclosed to the audience at the time of the activity

Accreditation



In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and RWJBarnabas Health. Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

Nurses: This activity is awarded 6.75 ANCC contact hours. Nurses should claim only those contact hours actually spent participating in the activity.

Physician Associates: Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences has been authorized by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This activity is designated for 6.75 AAPA Category 1 CME credits. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.



Method of Participation

In order to meet the learning objectives and receive continuing education credits, participants are expected to, check in at the registration desk, attend the program and complete an online evaluation at the conclusion of the activity. A CE certificate will be emailed to participants upon completion of the online evaluation.

Registration Fee: \$10

The non-refundable registration fee includes continental breakfast, refreshment breaks, lunch, continuing education credits and course material. Registration can only be accepted through our secure online website through May 18, 2026. Registration will not be confirmed until payment is received. If payment is not received in time for the activity, Rutgers reserves the right to cancel the registration.

Pre-registration is recommended. On-site registration will be accommodated on a space available basis.

To Register: <https://rutgers.cloud-cme.com/8RWJBHStroke>



Course Material

In an effort to provide the most complete materials to attendees and conserve resources, PDF versions of the lecture slides will be made available on-line to registered attendees. Additional information will be provided in future confirmation communications.

Confirmation

Once registered, you will receive an email confirmation. As the activity date approaches, you will receive additional information to assist you with your plans to participate in this activity.

Location

Pines Manor
2085 Lincoln Highway
Edison, NJ 08817

Complimentary parking will be available at the Pine Manor. Participants will receive additional information in their confirmation materials.

For Additional Information

For additional information, questions, or concerns, or if you require special arrangements to attend this activity, please contact CCOE by email at ccoe@rbhs.rutgers.edu.

Rutgers Health and RWJBarnabas Health reserve the right to modify program content, faculty and program activities. It also reserves the right to cancel the activity if necessary. If the activity is cancelled, liability is limited to the registration fee.

Activity Code: 26MC11