

Procare Ambulance of Maryland and GBMC Partnership Ensures Quicker Transport For STEMI Heart Attack Patients

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BALTIMORE, Md. – April 25, 2011 – Procare Ambulance of Maryland, Inc., a full-service woman-owned private commercial ambulance and wheelchair van transportation company based in Towson, Md., is pleased to announce a successful partnership with the Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC) to provide safe and rapid transportation for ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarctions (STEMI) patients. The result of this partnership has been significantly improved patient outcomes and increasing survival rates for STEMI patients. It is estimated that in Maryland, approximately 5,600 patients experience a STEMI annually.

A STEMI is the most severe and most common type of heart attack, in which the coronary artery is completely blocked off by the blood clot and as a result virtually all the heart muscle being supplied by the affected artery starts to die. Rapid transport to a healthcare facility capable of performing percutaneous intervention (PCI), commonly referred to as angioplasty, is critical to the survivability of such a heart attack. Experts say the sooner that a patient is treated to relieve the blockage causing the STEMI, the better the heart muscle will recover.

As of April 1, the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), the state agency responsible for coordinating Maryland's emergency medical services (EMS) response, has designated 23 hospitals as "Cardiac Interventional Centers," facilities that comply with state standards to receive patients transported by EMS who are experiencing a STEMI. However, for patients seeking treatment at non-PCI centers such as GBMC who may not be aware they are experiencing a STEMI, rapid transportation to a PCI center is imperative.

For many years, the only transportation available from GBMC for STEMI patients who needed to be treated at a PCI center was to utilize local emergency medical services resources via the 911 system – which might commit resources that would otherwise be dispatched to other emergencies – or an ambulance from the hospital where the patient was being transferred, which at times was a lengthy and often time-consuming process.

Responding to the need for critical transportation to a PCI center, Procare and GBMC formed a partnership. While Procare is required to respond to a request for STEMI transport within 15 minutes, its average response time since launching the service in July 2009 has been 6.25 minutes.

Jeffrey Sternlicht, M.D., GBMC's chairman of emergency medicine, said, "This partnership ensures that our Emergency Department patients with chest pain who need advanced care in a cardiac catheterization lab are taken care of as safely and quickly as possible."

Many lives have been positively changed as a result. "I recall one 36-year-old man who came into the emergency department complaining of nausea, having no idea he had a total blockage. ED staff treated and stabilized him and called for us to transport," said Mike Saval, a Procare CCEMTP. "If we hadn't transported him so quickly there is a chance he wouldn't be with his family today because time is muscle. This is exactly the type of patient that GBMC and Procare started this program to save."

Since the founding of the partnership between Procare and GBMC, door to balloon time (measured from the time the patient walks into the hospital to the time the balloon is inflated in the coronary artery at the receiving hospital) for STEMI patients have decreased to less than 90 minutes (the national benchmark), with some less than 60 minutes.

"Our goal is to transport as quickly and safely as possible so that as a team we can beat the national benchmark for door to balloon times and give the patient their best chance of survival," said Debbie Ailiff, president and chief executive officer of Procare. "Recently we transported a 47-year-old man from GBMC and arrived at the catheterization lab, where the patient received advanced care, within 24 minutes after the time Procare received the request for transport, and also transported a 56-year old-man and arrived at the catheterization lab within 17 minutes after receiving the request for transport. These stats are remarkable."

"We are proud to have co-founded such a successful program and we attribute that success to a strong partnership between Procare and GBMC. We put our patients first and share the values of safety, quality, compliance and teamwork," Ailiff said.

About Procare Ambulance of Maryland Inc. (www.procareambulance.net) - Procare Ambulance of Maryland Inc. is a full service, woman-owned commercial ambulance and wheelchair van transportation service providing emergency and non-emergency ambulance and wheelchair van transportation throughout the State of Maryland 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Procare's staff includes highly skilled and compassionate teams of Registered Nurses, Critical Care Paramedics, Paramedics, Emergency Medical Technicians and Emergency Medical Dispatchers. Procare has

provided high quality medical transportation, compassionate patient care, and reliable service throughout the State of Maryland since 2005. For more information, visit www.procareambulance.net.

About GBMC - GBMC HealthCare includes Greater Baltimore Medical Center, a 285-bed acute care not-for-profit hospital which opened in 1965 and provides Health, Healing and Hope; Greater Baltimore Medical Associates, a group of more than 40 multi-specialty physician practices on the hospital's Towson campus and in satellite locations across the region; Gilchrist Hospice Care, Maryland's largest hospice organization offering both in-home care as well as a 34-bed inpatient unit; and the GBMC Foundation, which raises funds to support the organization's mission. For more information, visit www.gbmc.org

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