

## Telemedicine Equipment Gets Updated Technology and Expanded Use

By Irene Cole



Stroke is a medical emergency and is the leading cause of adult disability in the United States and the leading cause of death worldwide. When a blood vessel in the brain gets blocked or bursts, the area supplied by this vessel quickly starts to die.

Through affiliation with the Michigan Stroke Network, Deckerville Community Hospital is one of several rural hospitals which have the ability to provide live, face to face consultation with neurovascular specialists at St Joseph Mercy Oakland when someone comes to the hospital with signs and symptoms of a stroke. Time is critical when treatment is needed and off site expert medical management can be speedily provided.

A few months ago the hospital's stroke "robot" was updated with a telephonic stethoscope and headset and a privacy handset. This allows the specialist to listen to the patient's heart or blood vessels, and also offers direct, private conversation. One's presence is projected to another location to hear, see, and talk as though actually there.

Recently this telemedicine unit is being used to enhance treatment for surgical patients at Deckerville Hospital. Specialists from St. Joseph Mercy Port Huron can check on their patient anytime and promptly deliver care. This exciting and expanded use of the unit has been well received by the patients.