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NEWS

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## Columbia Memorial Hospital links into OHSU's telemedicine network

**A**STORIA – Until recently, when Columbia Memorial Hospital admitted stroke and trauma patients, local doctors were forced to work quickly without the benefit of a specialist's input.

That all changed when CMH joined Oregon Health Science University's Telemedicine Network. Now, local physicians can begin life-saving treatments sooner, reduce unnecessary medical transfers out of the area and keep patients and their families in their local community.

"The old model was using a telephone," said Dr. Miles Ellenby, medical director of the OHSU Pediatric Telemedicine Program. "Now, instead of someone telling me a child is in respiratory distress, I can see it for myself."

Ellenby referred to the "real-time" interactive consultation he is capable of doing from Portland with the aid of the OHSU Telemedicine Network state-of-the-art audio-visual system.

The system, which is mounted on a mobile platform, features a fully movable camera head and monitor, which is controlled by an OHSU specialist via laptop computer, a privacy handset and speakers. "The docs 'beam in' to the cart



Dr. Miles Ellenby, medical director of the Oregon Health Sciences University Pediatric Telemedicine Program, demonstrates new technology linking OHSU with Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria. Photo by LeeAnn Neal

with laptops," said Mark Lovgren, director of OHSU Telehealth Services, referring to the out-of-area specialists who are able to

consult with a local patient from afar.

Ellenby and Lovgren were in Astoria on March 31 to present the technology to

the public during the Astoria Warrenton Chamber of Commerce's Business After Hours at Columbia Memorial Hospital's Community Center.

The hospital's director of marketing, Paul Mitchell, said the technology is particularly reassuring when the hospital is dealing with stroke patients. Acute stroke treatment with an injection of thrombolytics offers patients a 30 percent higher chance of surviving a stroke without becoming disabled, he said. The Telemedicine Network allows OHSU stroke neurologists to collaborate with hospitals to examine patients in Astoria, he added.

When it comes to pediatric emergencies, there are only two pediatric trauma centers in Oregon, both of which are in Portland, said Lovgren.

However, when it comes to pediatric patients, "transport is expensive and sometimes dangerous," he added. But if necessary, CMH staff and OHSU can plan a transfer to OHSU or OHSU's Doernbecher Children's Hospital, where medical staff will be briefed and awaiting the patient, said Lovgren.

For more information, go to [ohsuhealth.com/telemedicine](http://ohsuhealth.com/telemedicine).

—LeeAnn Neal