

Press Release

Inland helps regional hospital save lives

Woman's stroke treated remotely via Providence Telestroke Network

Heppner, Oregon - August 12th, 2013:

We were recently relayed a rather remarkable story from Heppner, OR.

Sandy Matthews, Office Manager at Inland Development since 2005, personally experienced the benefits of Inland's unique high capacity service to Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner during the successful treatment her mother. When Sandy's mother Jean Bennett had a stroke last month, she became the first patient from Pioneer Memorial to be treated by a robot utilizing the Providence Telestroke Network.

Here's a short summary of the story:

Heppner resident and cattle rancher, 83 year-old Jean Bennett, usually spends her days hauling hay and traveling in her red pick-up truck for her state job as a part-time livestock brand inspector. So, when she had trouble reading the telephone bill last month, her husband Don knew something wasn't right. "I could see the information on the bill, but it just didn't register – I couldn't comprehend what it was," says Jean. Don suspected Jean was having a stroke and despite Jean's requests to go lay down, Don insisted they go to the hospital. Don's keen eye for recognizing the signs of a stroke was critical to Jean's survival. More than 90 percent of Americans don't know the signs of a stroke.

When they arrived at Pioneer Memorial Hospital, at eight miles away the nearest medical facility, doctors immediately recognized that Jean was having a stroke. They connected to the recently implemented Providence Telestroke Network and Jean was examined by Dr. Lisa Yanase, a stroke neurologist in Portland, via the Telestroke Robot. Pioneer Memorial Hospital had just recently become part of the Providence Telestroke Network through previously unavailable high-speed broadband services provided by Inland Development, a Not-For-Profit, community driven, and locally owned fiber-optic communications provider, who serves Healthcare, Education, and Government entities in eight Eastern Oregon counties. Before that, stroke patients who arrived at the community hospital were typically Lifeflighted to Portland - a process that takes well over an hour. And with stroke, that could mean the difference between life and death, or living with a major disability. Two million brain cells are killed every minute a stroke is left untreated.

Dr. Yanase determined that Jean had an ischemic stroke – a clot that was blocking oxygen from getting to her brain. Under Dr. Yanase's guidance, the medical team administered the only FDA approved drug treatment for ischemic strokes – the clot-busting drug tPA (tissue Plasminogen Activator). Jean was lucky – only two percent of people whose lives could be saved by tPA receive treatment in time.

Without the combined efforts and advancements in communications technology by Pioneer Memorial, Providence Brain Institute's Telestroke Network, and Inland Development Corporation, whose endeavors are in part facilitated by its wholly-owned subsidiary WindWave Communications, which provides high-speed Wave Technology to regional businesses and carriers, this life saving Video Telemedicine would not be possible.