

TO MEDIA:

CONTACT PERSON: Robin Jennings

Director, Communications

Excelsa Health

724-837-1781 TEL

724-516-4483 CELL

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**ROUND-THE-CLOCK OUTPATIENT MONITORING EXPANDS
NEUROLOGY DIAGNOSTIC CAPABILITIES AT EXCELA HEALTH**

LATROBE, PA, March 9, 2010 ... As part of ongoing efforts to expand and enhance neurology services in support of its Neuroscience Center at Latrobe Hospital, Excelsa Health now offers 24- hour ambulatory EEG services.

According to Thomas Ferree, RT(R)(N), CNMT, supervisor of Non-Invasive Cardiology /Neurodiagnostic Services at Excelsa Latrobe, EEG, or electroencephalogram, is a test to detect problems in the electrical activity of the brain “An EEG is a very effective tool in helping to pinpoint abnormal neurological activity such as the occurrence of seizures or blackouts,” he noted.

Typically, the test is performed by an EEG technician in a physician’s office, at a hospital, or at an independent laboratory. “With the availability of an ambulatory EEG, we are now able to offer this service on an outpatient basis,” stated Ferree. “It is a dynamic study that allows enhanced convenience and flexibility for patients because it can easily be done within the comfort of their own home. With a longer monitoring period, there is a better chance of recording potential activity as well as an increased ability to pinpoint or correlate specific time occurrences,” Ferree added. “The data can help to determine if a specific activity or situation triggered an attack, thus providing additional information that could be pertinent in the patient’s overall plan of care.”

To perform the study, a series of small wires are attached to the patient's scalp. The wires are then plugged into a small recording device about the size of an I-Pod or cell phone that fits in a small fanny pack fastened to the patient's belt area.

Once prepared for the test, patients are then free to return home and pursue their normal day to day activities. During this monitoring period, the unit will record all brain activity. Additionally, patients are provided with a diary to document events such as dizziness, blackout or seizure and the time of day the event occurred.

Within 24, 48 or 72 hours, the patient returns to the hospital for removal of the unit and the recorded data is downloaded to a computer for interpretation by a neurologist.

Currently outpatient EEG monitoring is available through Excelsa Latrobe only, with the possibility of further expansion across the health system. But Ferree noted the availability locally is a plus for patients who previously would have traveled to Pittsburgh for this level of neurological care. "With this added service, patients can get back to living life and doing what they need to be doing with very little inconvenience and disruption to their daily routine."

For more information on neurodiagnostic services, call 724-537-1520, or visit www.excelahealth.org.