



St. Mary's hospitals nationally recognized for commitment to providing high-quality heart and stroke care

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American Heart Association presents the Get With The Guidelines® awards for proven dedication to best practices and life-saving care

ATHENS, Ga. — St. Mary's Health Care Systems' hospitals in Athens, Lavonia and Greensboro have received a total of 11 American Heart Association quality achievement awards for demonstrating commitment to following up-to-date, research-based guidelines for the treatment of heart disease and stroke, ultimately leading to more lives saved, shorter recovery times and fewer readmissions to the hospital.

Heart disease and stroke are the No. 1 and No. 4 causes of death in the United States, respectively, according to the American Heart Association [2026 Statistical Update](#). Studies show patients can recover better when providers consistently follow treatment guidelines.

For 2026, St. Mary's three hospitals received these achievement awards:

St. Mary's Hospital, Athens

- Get With The Guidelines® - Stroke Gold Plus (18th year in a row)
 - Target: Stroke Honor Roll
 - Target: Type 2 Diabetes™ Honor Roll
- Get With The Guidelines® - Resuscitation Bronze Award
 - Target: CPR

St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital, Lavonia

- Get With The Guidelines® - Stroke Gold Plus (4th year in a row)
 - Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite
 - Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll
- Get With The Guidelines® - Rural Stroke Gold (2nd year in a row)

St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital, Greensboro

- Get With The Guidelines® - Stroke Gold Plus (3rd year in a row)
 - Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll

[Get With The Guidelines®](#) puts the expertise of the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association to work for hospitals nationwide, helping ensure patient care is aligned with the latest evidence- and research-based guidelines. As a participant in the Get With The Guidelines programs, St. Mary's qualified for the awards by demonstrating how their organization has committed to improving quality care.

"Our entire St. Mary's ministry is committed to improving care by adhering to the latest treatment guidelines and streamlining processes to ensure timely and proper care for heart attacks and strokes," said Stonish Pierce, President and CEO, Trinity Health Georgia. "Get With The Guidelines programs make it easier for our teams to put proven knowledge and guidelines to work on a daily basis, which helps us ensure more people in a multicounty area of Northeast Georgia experience longer, healthier lives."

"These awards show St. Mary's commitment to caring for those in their community who need cardiovascular care," said Karen E. Joynt Maddox, M.D., MPH, chair of the American Heart Association Quality Oversight Committee. "By following the American Heart Association's quality improvement protocols, St. Mary's can help realize our shared vision of improved patient outcomes, fewer readmissions and lower mortality rates — a win for health care systems, families and communities."

In addition to its American Heart Association recognitions, St. Mary's Hospital meets specific scientific guidelines as a Joint Commission-certified Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Center, featuring a comprehensive system for rapid diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients admitted to the emergency department. Thrombectomy-capable stroke centers are available to perform a cerebral thrombectomy 24/7/365, which is an endovascular procedure that removes large vessel blood clots that can cause some of the most severe ischemic strokes.

St. Mary's Hospital also is accredited as a Chest Pain Center with Primary Percutaneous Coronary Intervention by the American College of Cardiology.

To further enhance community access to heart and vascular care that can save and enhance lives, St. Mary's recently began construction of the \$35 million Center for Heart, Vascular and Neurosciences in Athens and the \$45.6 million Good Samaritan Pavilion in Greensboro. In particular, the CHVN will enhance St. Mary's ability to monitor and treat the conditions that cause deadly hemorrhagic strokes, such as aneurysms and arteriovenous malformations.

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About Get With The Guidelines

Get With The Guidelines® is the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's hospital-based quality improvement program that provides hospitals with the latest research-based guidelines. Developed with the goal of saving lives and hastening recovery, Get With The Guidelines has touched the lives of more than 18 million patients since 2001. For more information, visit heart.org.

About St. Mary's Health Care System

St. Mary's Health Care System, a member of Trinity Health, one of the largest not-for-profit health care systems in the U.S., is a faith-based health care ministry whose mission is to be a compassionate and transforming healing presence in the communities it serves. St. Mary's includes hospitals in Athens, Lavonia and Greensboro, as well as a multi-practice medical group, a retirement community, outpatient care facilities, a region-wide home health care/hospice service and clinical affiliations with the University of Georgia College of Medicine. For more information, please visit www.stmarys-health.org.

About Trinity Health

Trinity Health is one of the largest not-for-profit, faith-based health care systems in the nation. It is a family of 133,000 colleagues and more than 38,900 physicians and clinicians caring for diverse communities across 23 states. Nationally recognized for care and experience, the Trinity Health system includes 91 hospitals, 101 continuing care locations, the second largest PACE program in the country as well as many other health and well-being services. In fiscal year 2025, the Livonia, Michigan-based health system invested \$2.9 billion in its communities in the form of charity care, community benefit and other programs and services.



St. Mary's Hospital, Athens



St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital, Lavonia



St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital, Greensboro