Neurovascular Care Leaders
Westchester Medical Center’s comprehensive neurovascular surgery program is equipped to treat the fullest range of diseases affecting the blood vessels of the brain.

M any conditions of the neurovascular system require urgent and expert treatment to prevent long-term or permanent complications. When such an event occurs, patients need experienced care—and fast. In the greater Fairfield/Westchester community, that care is found at Westchester Medical Center, right in Valhalla. The quaternary care medical center is a member of the Westchester Medical Center Health Network.

"We have the region’s only comprehensive stroke center and dedicated neuroscience intensive care unit," shares Chirag Gandhi, M.D., Director and Chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery. "These two resources are the linchpin of our ability to offer personalized, high-quality neurovascular care to our community."

A hybrid operating room, one of the few in the tri-state area, enables Dr. Gandhi and his team to perform both open and endovascular (minimally invasive) therapies to maximize each patient’s potential for positive outcomes. The interventional treatment of acute ischemic stroke, for example, is a delicate yet powerful procedure to retrieve large blood clots that have become lodged in the brain—a procedure made possible by the collective knowledge, experience, and facilities needed to act quickly and effectively.

The compassionate, integrated team of multidisciplinary practitioners includes surgeons, neuroradiologists, neuroradiologists, and deeply trained nurses and therapists who all join forces in delivering tailored, nuanced care to each patient. The center’s high-volume caseload conditions teams to continually advance their expertise. “Like everything else in life, the more you do something, the better you become at it. Having a high-volume center means that nothing surprises us. We’re all very comfortable treating extremely complex diseases,” says Dr. Gandhi.

The team treats both elective and emergency cases, offering primary and secondary opinions for conditions that include acute stroke, brain aneurysm, arteriovenous malformation (AVM), arteriovenous fistula (AVF), cavernous angioma, and intracranial stenosis.

Seeing the Symptoms
There is a saying in the neurovascular community: Time is brain. Millions of brain cells die every second after a stroke. When an aneurysm has occurred, the difference of mere minutes in receiving vessel-opening treatment can make for drastic differences in outcomes. But how does one know what qualifies as a neurovascular emergency? Tell-tale signs include, but are not limited to, one-sided weakness, sudden confusion, and difficulty speaking. Other signs might include an extreme headache or a sudden and extraordinary diversion from a person’s typical neurological health.

"Each of us knows ourselves the best. It’s different for every patient, but anything that seems out of the ordinary should be immediately assessed with medical attention," says Dr. Gandhi.

Pursuit of Excellence
For Dr. Gandhi, neurovascular care is a fascinating field that comes with an enormous potential to explore undervalued territory. Westchester Medical Center’s neurovascular program is proud to participate regularly in clinical trials that help forge new frontiers in the treatment and understanding of stroke and aneurysm care. Having the powerful combination of state-of-the-art facilities and therapies, plus a deeply experienced team, makes Westchester Medical Center and the WMCHealth Brain and Spine Institute a formidable force of good in the evolving field of neurovascular disease.

"For much of human history, the brain has been very much a black box. It’s an exciting time to be a clinician, researcher, and educator in a field that provides direct care for the most vital organ in the human body," Dr. Gandhi says.