At St. Luke’s we have a well-coordinated process that moves heart attack patients through the Emergency Department and into the Cath Lab in 90 minutes or less.

Dr. Michael Miller MD  St. Luke’s Emergency Department

"At St. Luke’s we have a well-coordinated process that moves heart attack patients through the Emergency Department and into the Cath Lab in 90 minutes or less."

When minutes count
LifeGuard Air Ambulance is a lifesaver

Time is heart muscle

Friday, April 25 was a day off for 51-year-old Karen Bachman. The freediver woman had planned on starting her weekend early by gardening. The night before, Karen told her husband, Chuck, that she was going to bed early because she wasn’t feeling well.

When Chuck got up for work, Karen slept in. ‘I was getting up later than usual, she was feeling a little better and fixed herself some toast for breakfast. Karen went out to the garden to work for an hour, but then her arms started to feel heavy.

I don’t know how else to describe it, except that they felt like lead pipes,” said Bachman. ‘Our house sit on about 20 acres and I was walking around to the front of the house and I felt winded.”

Karen was having a heart attack and needed to get to the hospital. “I don’t know how else to describe it, except that they felt like lead pipes,” said Bachman. ‘Our house sit on about 20 acres and I was walking around to the front of the house and I felt winded.”

Karen laid on the floor of her home and called 9-1-1. Once they arrived, her husband immediately knew something wasn’t right. ‘I knew my body and I just knew something wasn’t right.”

A nurse for 27 years at St. Luke’s, her medical background locked in as Karen remembered taking aspirin.

I told calling my neighbor, but no one was home,” said Bachman. ‘I decided I should probably call 9-1-1, because I was all alone. I know my body and I just knew something wasn’t right.”

I called 9-1-1 and they came right away. The paramedics quickly determined Bachman was having a heart attack and dispatched St. Luke’s Lifeguard Ambulance.

When Lifeguard is dispatched for a call there is a team of doctors trained in emergency medicine and critical care. A nurse, a paramedic and driving crew accompany the patient.

Lifeguard transportation
A new service available at St. Luke’s

Lifeguard has been serving the Cape Girardeau and surrounding communities for nearly three decades. Lifeguard provides around-the-clock emergency and critical care transportation.

Advanced, specialized medical training and experience of the crew all add up to a better chance of survival.

When Lifeguard is dispatched for a call there is a team of doctors trained in emergency medicine and critical care. A nurse, a paramedic and driving crew accompany the patient.

Lifeguard landed on a rural, gravel road near Karen’s home. When the landing was complete, Karen was taken to the Lifeguard ambulance. She was having a heart attack, but something must have made me take that aspirin,” said Bachman.

Bachman laid on the floor of her home waiting for the paramedics from Area Ambulance to arrive. Once they arrived, Bachman was loaded up to a heart monitor, which monitored her electrical activity via EKG reading via fax to St. Luke’s Emergency Department.

The paramedics quickly determined Bachman was having a heart attack and dispatched St. Luke’s Lifeguard Ambulance.

When Lifeguard is dispatched for a call there is a team of doctors trained in emergency medicine and critical care. A nurse, a paramedic and driving crew accompany the patient.

Lifeguard has been serving the Cape Girardeau and surrounding communities for nearly three decades. Lifeguard provides around-the-clock emergency and critical care transportation.

Advanced, specialized medical training and experience of the crew all add up to a better chance of survival.

When Lifeguard is dispatched for a call there is a team of doctors trained in emergency medicine and critical care. A nurse, a paramedic and driving crew accompany the patient.

Lifeguard landed on a rural, gravel road near Karen’s home. When the landing was complete, Karen was taken to the Lifeguard ambulance. She was having a heart attack, but something must have made me take that aspirin,” said Bachman.

Bachman laid on the floor of her home waiting for the paramedics from Area Ambulance to arrive. Once they arrived, Bachman was loaded up to a heart monitor, which monitored her electrical activity via EKG reading via fax to St. Luke’s Emergency Department.

The paramedics quickly determined Bachman was having a heart attack and dispatched St. Luke’s Lifeguard Ambulance.

When Lifeguard is dispatched for a call there is a team of doctors trained in emergency medicine and critical care. A nurse, a paramedic and driving crew accompany the patient.

Lifeguard has been serving the Cape Girardeau and surrounding communities for nearly three decades. Lifeguard provides around-the-clock emergency and critical care transportation.

Advanced, specialized medical training and experience of the crew all add up to a better chance of survival.

When Lifeguard is dispatched for a call there is a team of doctors trained in emergency medicine and critical care. A nurse, a paramedic and driving crew accompany the patient.

Lifeguard landed on a rural, gravel road near Karen’s home. When the landing was complete, Karen was taken to the Lifeguard ambulance. She was having a heart attack, but something must have made me take that aspirin,” said Bachman.

Bachman laid on the floor of her home waiting for the paramedics from Area Ambulance to arrive. Once they arrived, Bachman was loaded up to a heart monitor, which monitored her electrical activity via EKG reading via fax to St. Luke’s Emergency Department.

The paramedics quickly determined Bachman was having a heart attack and dispatched St. Luke’s Lifeguard Ambulance.

When Lifeguard is dispatched for a call there is a team of doctors trained in emergency medicine and critical care. A nurse, a paramedic and driving crew accompany the patient.

Lifeguard has been serving the Cape Girardeau and surrounding communities for nearly three decades. Lifeguard provides around-the-clock emergency and critical care transportation.

Advanced, specialized medical training and experience of the crew all add up to a better chance of survival.
St. Luke’s new and improved ER services

Construction at St. Luke’s began in 2006, but the hard work started well before that time. Several years prior, St. Luke’s administrators assembled a multidisciplinary team to map out a modernization project. "The old ER was built in 1972," said Sandi McIntosh, St. Luke’s Emergency Services director. "Our new facility was designed to meet patient and family needs and also facilitate patient flow.

ER design

"To design like a racetrack," said Ryan Sundermann, MD, St. Luke’s Emergency Department medical director. "The doctors and nurses’ work stations are placed in the center surrounded by patient rooms. It creates better flow and easier access to patients. There is also consultant work space and X-ray viewing capabilities.”

A new feature of St. Luke’s ER is two separate entrances for patients who arrive by car and those who arrive by ambulance. During the day, patients arriving by car can take advantage of free valet parking. When they walk in the Emergency entrance they are greeted by a staff person from guest relations. For those arriving more urgently, the ambulance bay is used. The separate entrance decreases congestion and assists with faster patient triage.

"The way our new ER is laid out – we bring all of the equipment needed to the patient like wireless heart monitors and EKGs,” said McIntosh. "Our staff also uses wireless communication, which enables instant voice communication that increases productivity and communication among staff.”

From triage, patients are moved into a private room, where bedside registration takes place. And as they anticipate the doctor, patients can enjoy watching television on a flat screen.

Private rooms

St. Luke’s added ten rooms for patients bringing the total number of private rooms in the ER to 34. There are four large critical care rooms and additional rooms are available if needed.

"The way our new ER is laid out – we bring all of the equipment needed to the patient like wireless heart monitors and EKGs,” said McIntosh. "Our staff also uses wireless communication, which enables instant voice communication that increases productivity and communication among staff.”

There are three nurses’ stations. Two in the racetrack area and one near the critical care rooms. In addition, all of the private rooms are set up exactly the same and supplies and equipment are in a central location – all of these changes streamline care and reduce wait time.

St. Luke’s added two private consultant rooms, which are available to families to speak with doctors in a private setting. These rooms have a sofa, chairs, television and telephone.

Patient amenities

Other highlights of St. Luke’s newly remodeled Emergency Department include a spacious and aesthetically pleasing lobby, a patient activity cart. Another amenity for patients and families is wireless Internet access. If patients or visitors don’t have a laptop they can check one out. And while St. Luke’s works hard to eliminate waiting, sometimes it can’t be avoided, that’s why the hospital started using guest paging, which allow for more privacy and can be used to keep individuals updated.

"We expanded and remodeled St. Luke’s ER to better meet the needs of the community,” said Dr. Sundermann. “I think we’ve exceeded expectations; not only is this a top-notch facility, which redlines emergency care for patients, but it’s a great environment to work in for doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals. The focus of the ER remodel was two patient comfort, care and access, combined with the latest technology. I think we’ve exceeded expectations with these changes.”

Log on to stlukescr.org to take a virtual tour of St. Luke’s new ER.

Inside the new ER

Ambulance bay

The enclosed space protects patients from the elements. Adjacent to the ambulance bay is a patient treatment room, decontamination room and a dedicated EMS/pediatric safety workspace.

Nurses’ stations

There are three nurses’ stations, which are surrounded by patient rooms, allowing for more accessibility to patients.

Critical care rooms

The critical care rooms are equipped with all of the latest technology, an EKG viewer, extra lighting and plenty of room for additional equipment.

Patient activity cart

Cart is stocked with Gameboys, DVD players, playing cards, crayons and coloring books for ER guests.

St. Luke’s healthbeat | winter 2009