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Hospitals Join DOH in Demonstrating New Stroke Care Initiative

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Home

100K Campaign

Breast Cancer Project

DATABANK

Education & Events

Grassroots

About HANYS

Healthcare
Leadership Library

Library

NYSCHP

Provider-Educator
Collaboration

Press Releases

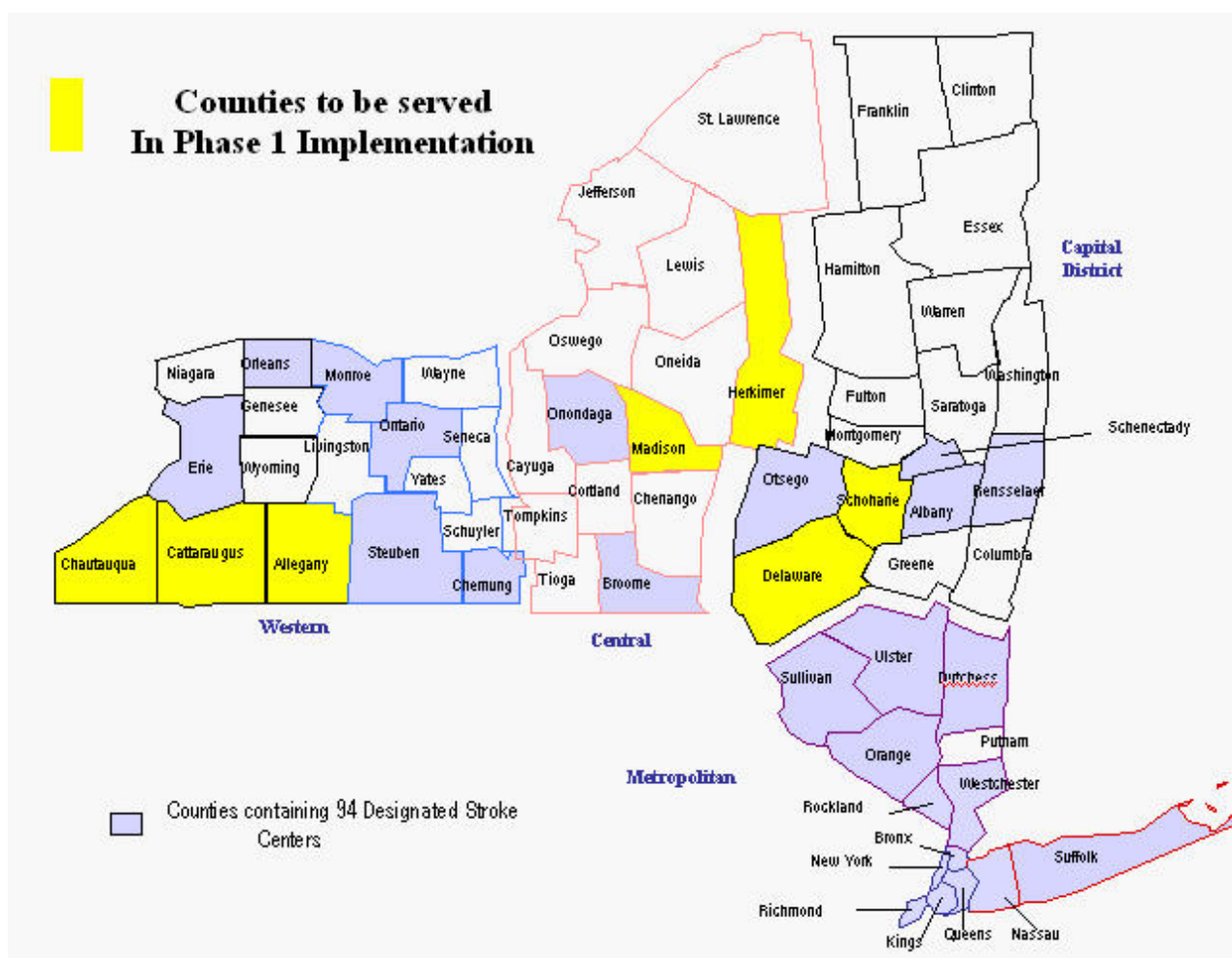
At a press conference in Albany yesterday with representatives from several hospitals, Dr. Antonia C. Novello, New York's Commissioner of Health, demonstrated a new initiative designed to bring state-of-the-art stroke care to rural areas of the state through telemedicine.

The Internet-based system known as Remote Evaluation of Acute Ischemic Stroke (REACH) connects neurologists at "hub" hospitals with rural "spoke" hospitals. The neurologists can in real time assess patients through an audio-visual link, review computer tomography (CT) scans, and recommend treatment over a secure Web-based system using a laptop computer.

During the demonstration, representatives from the Medical College of Georgia, where the REACH program was developed, presented a live demonstration of the system through a connection with Olean General Hospital.

Referred to as a "stroke management tool," the REACH program shortens the time to treatment in rural areas. To be most effective, a "clot buster" drug must be used within a three-hour window after a stroke.

Five "hub" hospitals are planned across upstate New York. Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown and Millard Fillmore Gates Circle Hospital in Buffalo are participating in the first phase of this initiative. Other hub hospitals will be Albany Medical Center, SUNY Upstate Medical University, and Strong Memorial Hospital.



This Department of Health slide from the Commissioner's presentation shows counties with designated stroke centers (as of July 19) and counties that will be served by Phase 1 of the new REACH initiative.

Members can view the Department of Health press release and Commissioner Novello's presentation slides at http://www.hanys.org/members_only/technology/other_info_tech_issues.cfm. — Fred Heigel

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