

LIFE-SAVING STUDY

Brockton to join study of heart attack medication

■ The city will be among three communities statewide to provide a mixture of glucose, insulin and potassium to heart attack patients being transported by ambulance to a hospital.

By Maria Papadopoulos
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

BROCKTON — When getting emergency care for symptoms of a heart attack, every second counts.

The heart may be starving for oxygen and heart cells may begin to die.

But a new emergency medication delivery system to be launched in Brockton this summer as part of a national study through the city's hospitals and ambulance service aims to change that.

Brockton will be among three communities statewide taking part in a 2-year national study to provide a mixture of glucose, insulin and potassium to heart attack patients being transported by ambulance to a hospital.

"In essence, it's a way of buying time and preventing or limiting the size of a heart attack," said Dr. Richard Herman, chief of emergency services at Brockton Hospital.

Brockton Hospital, Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center and American Medical Response, the ambulance service the city contracts with to

provide advanced life support services, will take part in the study.

Doctors say the combination of glucose, insulin and potassium can prolong cell life during a heart attack until more definitive treatment can be given.

While not a new therapy, doctors said the study will be a large scale project to test its use when delivered very early in the course of a heart attack.

Heart attack patients will be offered the medicine by ambulance paramedics while en route to Brockton hospitals starting in July, officials said.

"The goal is to save lives," said Dr. Assad Sayah, director of the emergency department at Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center in Brockton, also the principal trial investigator for the Massachusetts regional center.

Worcester and Concord will also take part in the study, he said.

The study is being led by researchers at Tufts New England Medical Center and was funded through a \$36 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, said Joni Beshansky, project director at Tufts New England Medical Center.

"Brockton has this opportunity to participate in this national trial, and that's the exciting part about it," Beshansky said.

The goal is to enroll over 15,000 patients nationwide in the study in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Texas, Beshansky said.