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HealthNet Aeromedical Services Eighth Base Now Open

Joint effort of HealthNet, Air Methods, West Virginia University Hospitals/WVUH-East

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. - HealthNet Aeromedical Services' eighth medical helicopter base, located in Martinsburg, W.Va., officially opened Monday. The base serves West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle and surrounding areas.

This new air medical base is a joint effort among HealthNet, Air Methods Corporation, West Virginia University Hospitals and West Virginia University Hospitals-East. The base is located at the regional airport and serves as the primary medical helicopter service for WVUH-East's City Hospital and Jefferson Memorial Hospital.

"Along with Air Methods and West Virginia University Hospitals/WVU Hospitals-East, we have been looking at the feasibility of having a base in the Martinsburg area for some time," said Chip Sovick, president and CEO of HealthNet. "We have determined that there is a long-term need and are pleased that we are able to offer this service."

The new base is serviced by a Eurocopter EC130 equipped with the latest technologies including Helicopter Terrain Avoidance Warning System (HTAWS), Night Vision Goggles (NVG), and real-time color weather radar.

"Previously, we had to rely on out-of-state medical helicopter providers for emergency air flight services," said Anthony Zelenka, chief administrative officer at City Hospital in Martinsburg. "This will certainly make a difference in providing more immediate EMS services in our area communities," he added.

In addition to transporting patients between hospitals, the service also is available to respond directly to accident scenes. Because the service is based in the Eastern Panhandle, response time will be quicker thus allowing medical crews to reach patients faster. Patients then can be transported more quickly to area hospitals for definitive care.

According to David Poulsen, NE Regional Vice President for Air Methods, his company has had a long and productive relationship with HealthNet for many years in several different markets. “We are pleased to further our partnership by working with HealthNet and WVUH-East to operate a helicopter service in the Martinsburg market. It greatly enhances the air medical services available to the Eastern Panhandle communities and the surrounding areas,” he said.

HealthNet Aeromedical Services was formed in 1986 and has safely completed more than 55,000 patient missions. Headquartered in Charleston, W.Va., HealthNet operates/and or is affiliated with seven helicopter bases serving West Virginia and significant portions of Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Tennessee. Sponsor hospitals of the HealthNet system include Cabell Huntington Hospital in Huntington, Charleston Area Medical Center in Charleston and West Virginia University Hospitals in Morgantown. For more information regarding HealthNet and its services, visit www.healthnet-aeromedical.com.

Air Methods Corporation (www.airmethods.com) is a leader in emergency air medical transportation and medical services. The Hospital-Based Services Division is the largest provider of air medical transport services for hospitals. The Community-Based Services Division is one of the largest community-based providers of air medical services. The Products Division specializes in the design and manufacture of aeromedical and aerospace technology. The company's fleet of owned, leased or maintained aircraft features more than 300 helicopters and fixed wing aircraft.

WVUH-East is a regional, not-for-profit, healthcare system serving the Eastern Panhandle. The system includes City Hospital, Jefferson Memorial Hospital and all related entities of both hospitals. The parent company of WVUH-East, West Virginia University Hospitals in Morgantown, W.Va., is a member of the Fairmont-based West Virginia United Health System, the state's largest healthcare network.