



## LIFE FORCE ADDS SIXTH HELICOPTER IN NORTH CAROLINA; ERLANGER SIGNS LETTER OF INTENT WITH MURPHY MEDI

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CHATTANOOGA TN -- Erlanger Health System officials announced today that LIFE FORCE plans to add a sixth helicopter to its fleet of air ambulances in August. The new LIFE FORCE air ambulance, operated by Med-Trans Corporation, will be based in Andrews, North Carolina at the Western Carolina Regional Airport outside of Murphy, North Carolina. Erlanger Health System also announced that they have signed a letter of intent with Murphy Medical Center.

"We are extremely pleased that LIFE FORCE is now expanding 'critical care in the air' services even further into the western North Carolina region," said Kevin M. Spiegel, FACHE, President and CEO of the Erlanger Health System. "Placement of this helicopter is the result of several years of solid relationship building with surrounding hospitals and the support of state and local elected officials and enables thousands of residents to quicker access to regional facilities like Erlanger Health System when they need it most."

The additional aircraft is expected to begin accepting patient flights on August 15, 2017 and the letter of intent is in response to an advanced relationship that is being discussed between Erlanger Health System and Murphy Medical Center. The due diligence process required by the letter of intent should take both organizations approximately 90 days to complete with the goal of reaching a definitive agreement on the future relationship by September-October timeframe.

"Erlanger and Murphy have signed an exclusive Letter of Intent to explore how our organizations can partner closer together to enhance and grow the existing medical care already being offered by Murphy Medical Center" said Robert M. Brooks, Executive VP & COO for Erlanger Health System. "The Letter of Intent is the first step in the process of exploring what the best structure could be for both Murphy Medical Center and Erlanger Health System."

The addition of the new LIFE FORCE helicopter brings the LIFE FORCE fleet to six total helicopters - four dual engine aircraft equipped with Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) and two single-engine aircraft that use visual flight rules, or VFR. In mountainous regions, aircraft not equipped with IFR can frequently get fogged in at their bases and are unable to answer patient transport requests. With an IFR aircraft now in that region, patients will have quicker access to higher level of care with increased safety, during periods where outside visual references are obscured. "Med-Trans Corporation is pleased to be able to support the Erlanger Health System to provide this critical service to the community" said Med-Trans president Rob Hamilton.

Erlanger's LIFE FORCE provides the clinical team for medical operations and Med Trans Corporation provides pilots and mechanics for the aeromedical service, along with the aircraft.



Med Trans equips the LIFE FORCE fleet with Airbus H135 helicopters and Bell 407 helicopters. The H135 model will be stationed at the Andrews base.

"Since 1988, LIFE FORCE has been bringing the hospital to the patient and this is something that communities have come to rely on," said Robbie Tester, VP of Operations of Erlanger Health System. "We are pleased to be able to expand that service further into the Western Carolina region to continue serving the residents, hospitals, local EMS agencies. The IFR components certainly increase safety and efficiency for the crews as well as those living or visiting in that region. It provides area residents easier access to world class facilities like Erlanger Health System when they need it most," he said.

LIFE FORCE is accredited by the commission for accreditation of medical transport systems and is nationally ranked as one of the highest performing air medical services in the country. As the only air ambulance program region that carries ultrasound, blood and plasma products and is credentialed by physicians at Erlanger to perform emergency surgical airway procedures while in-flight, LIFE FORCE also provides on-the-scene and in-flight critical care treatment such as trauma service, heart and stroke intervention, cutting edge pediatric care and high risk labor services to the patients in the aircraft.

#### About LIFE FORCE Air Medical

In addition to the Andrews location, LIFE FORCE has five other bases of operation throughout the region to serve residents within a 150-mile radius of Chattanooga. With headquarters at Erlanger's downtown location at 975 East Third Street in Chattanooga, LIFE FORCE also provides emergency helicopter transport from bases in Cleveland, Sparta, Winchester, Tn. and Calhoun and Blue Ridge, Ga. LIFE FORCE transported more than 2,500 patients in 2016. Learn more about LIFE FORCE at [www.lifeforceairmed.com](http://www.lifeforceairmed.com).

#### About Erlanger Health System

Erlanger Health System is an academic medical center affiliated with the University of Tennessee College of Medicine, and is a Level-One Trauma Center for adults. Children's Hospital at Erlanger is also the region's only pediatric hospital providing the highest level of trauma, critical and inpatient care, as well as the region's only Level IV neonatal intensive care unit. Erlanger is the only provider of tertiary care services spanning a 50,000 square-mile region encompassing southeast Tennessee, northwest Georgia, north Alabama and western North Carolina. The health system consists of five hospitals and six emergency departments, provides medical services for a fleet of five helicopters and offers centers of excellence in neurosciences, cancer care, cardiology, orthopedics, trauma, women and children's care and transplant services. With a history that dates back more than a century, Erlanger is the seventh largest public healthcare system in the United States and second largest employer in Chattanooga, Tenn. Each year, a half a million people are treated by the team of healthcare professionals who are part of Erlanger. Visit [www.erlanger.org](http://www.erlanger.org).



### About Med-Trans Corporation

Med-Trans is a leading national air medical provider focused on establishing partnerships with hospital systems, medical centers and EMS agencies with more than 90 bases across 23 states. Med-Trans offers customized air ambulance programs through alternative delivery/shared resource models, community based models and traditional hospital-based models. Its patient fleet numbers approximately 110 aircraft comprised predominantly of light single and twin-engine helicopters and twin-engine fixed-wing aircraft. For more information, visit [www.med-trans.net](http://www.med-trans.net).