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Hartford HealthCare, Air Methods and Baystate Health launch partnership to bring LIFE STAR air ambulance services to western Massachusetts

Westfield, Mass., Jan. 24, 2018 — Hartford HealthCare, Baystate Health and Air Methods today announce they have entered into a partnership that expands life-saving LIFE STAR air ambulance services to western Massachusetts. The new LIFE STAR helicopter is based at Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport in Westfield, Massachusetts. Westfield-Barnes is a Commercial Service Airport delivering 24x7 operations and a full suite of business, civilian and military and aviation services to Western Massachusetts

Currently, there are no other air ambulance services based in western Massachusetts. "Air Methods and LIFE STAR's operational and clinical expertise, combined with Baystate serving as the region's only Level 1 Trauma Center, made this partnership a win-win," said Jeffrey Flaks, president and chief operating officer for Hartford HealthCare. "It will allow the western Massachusetts region to benefit from a needed service under an efficient delivery model."

Patients suffering from medical emergencies and traumas that require timely transport to tertiary care centers are those that benefit from air ambulance services. In situations like a stroke or major blood loss, every minute matters — and rapid air transportation can make all the difference in survival and recovery.

"The LIFE STAR program has been an integral component of our services for more than 30 years. With nearly 32,000 flights and more than 20,000 patients served, we take pride in knowing countless lives have been saved thanks to LIFE STAR's talented crew and extraordinary capabilities," said Flaks. "Today, LIFE STAR reaches a new milestone."

Dr. Gerald Beltran, chief of Pre-hospital and Disaster Medicine at Baystate Medical Center, noted it is a fact that air transport saves lives. "Time is everything when a critically ill or injured patient needs the highest level of emergency care immediately, such as that available at our Level I trauma center, the only one in western Massachusetts. Having a LIFE STAR helicopter based close by in Westfield puts their highly-trained and talented crew closer to those patients in need of their life-saving services when transportation time is an issue in reaching us," said Beltran.

Each organization plays a critical role in the three-way partnership:

- LIFE STAR will provide medical and quality oversight, the medical flight crew, and communications support through its existing infrastructure at Hartford Hospital.
- Air Methods will assist with aircraft management, flight operations, and facilities including a hangar space.
- Baystate Medical Center's board certified trauma surgeons and specially-trained medical professionals will provide the highest level of care available in western Massachusetts for these critically-injured or ill patients

"We are honored to expand our partnership with Hartford HealthCare and join with Baystate Health in growing timely access to airborne critical care services," said Mike Allen, president and chief operating officer, Air Methods.

Dr. Beltran added: "We are grateful to partner with LIFE STAR services to provide this very important benefit to the community, which will make a difference in the lives of many for years to come."

This is LIFE STAR's third location, in addition to bases at MidState Medical Center in Meriden, Conn., and Backus Hospital in Norwich, Conn.

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About Hartford HealthCare

Hartford HealthCare is Connecticut's most comprehensive healthcare network. Our fully integrated health system includes a tertiary-care teaching hospital, an acute-care community teaching hospital, an acute-care hospital and trauma center, two community hospitals, the state's most extensive behavioral health network, a large multispecialty physician group, a regional home care system, an array of senior care services, a large physical therapy and rehabilitation network and an accountable care organization. The Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute provides coordinated care across five cancer centers, and is the charter member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance.

About Baystate Health

Baystate Health is a not-for-profit integrated healthcare system serving over 800,000 people throughout western Massachusetts. Nationally recognized as a leader in healthcare quality and safety, Baystate Health has more than 12,000 employees and serves a diverse population of patients at its teaching hospital, Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, as well as at Baystate Children's Hospital, its three community hospitals, several urban health centers, home care and hospice services, and a network of over 80 medical practices. A leader in medical education for more than a century, Baystate Health recently established a new regional campus of the University of Massachusetts Medical School, the first medical school campus in western Massachusetts. For more information on Baystate Health, visit www.baystatehealth.org.

About Air Methods

Air Methods is ready to save lives at every moment of every day, providing emergency air medical transport with over 300 bases of operations serving 48 states. Air Methods also operates eight maintenance centers of excellence throughout the nation and a national communications center.