Northwest MedStar to Integrate into Life Flight Network Creating an Expanded ICU-Level Critical Care Transport Program

*Life Flight Network to Open New Bases in Colville and Walla Walla*

SPOKANE, Wash. Mar 16, 2016 — Northwest MedStar is integrating its critical care transport program into Life Flight Network, an Oregon-based, not-for-profit air medical program serving the Pacific Northwest and Intermountain West. As a result of this expanded program, Life Flight Network will open new helicopter bases in Colville and Walla Walla, Wash. and add a fixed-wing aircraft to an existing base in Moses Lake, Wash. This collaboration is creating an expanded, hospital-owned and community-based company built on a foundation of safety, customer service and clinical excellence.

“Similar to how Northwest MedStar was formed more than two decades ago, this collaboration takes best practices from each program to create broader, more comprehensive air medical services,” said Nancy Vorhees, chief administrative officer for Northwest MedStar and Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS). “We have history to guide us as we move into the future to better care for our health care partners, our patients and our members. Life Flight Network is that partner.”

As part of the integration, Providence, the sole member of INHS, increases its ownership interest in Life Flight Network. Other members in Life Flight Network are Legacy Emanuel Medical Center, Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center and Oregon Health & Science University.

“To further our mission to care for those in need, we must look for opportunities to partner and collaborate with others,” said Elaine Couture, Providence Health Care regional chief executive and INHS CEO. “Integrating Northwest MedStar into Life Flight Network expands a hospital-owned and community-based company and ensures critical care transport services are readily available. Together, we are finding an even better way to care for our communities.”

ICU-level transport services will continue without interruption. All Northwest MedStar critical care flight team members were offered positions within Life Flight Network and will continue delivering patient care. The highly skilled and experienced teams will be working together, as one organization, to more efficiently respond to people in need of life-saving critical care transport.

“We are proud to welcome Northwest MedStar to the Life Flight Network family and at the same time expand ICU-level transport services in the region,” stated Michael Griffiths, Life Flight Network CEO. “We look forward to partnering with all hospitals, EMS, police and fire departments to continue our collective, award-winning critical care transport services built on safety, customer service and clinical excellence.”

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With expanded critical care ICU teams and resources, Life Flight Network will open two helicopter bases this summer in Walla Walla and Colville, and add a fixed-wing aircraft to an existing base in Moses Lake. “We continually evaluate critical care transport needs and determined adding bases and positioning an additional airplane in the region further meets the needs of the communities we serve,” added Griffiths.

Northwest MedStar and Life Flight Network are operating successful, nationally-recognized critical care transport organizations. Both programs are certified by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS) and have been awarded “Program of the Year” honors by the Association of Air Medical Services, recognizing a focus on safety and quality. By joining the services of Life Flight Network and Northwest MedStar, best practices from both well-established and respected organizations will be used to better serve the public.

Community members with current Northwest MedStar memberships automatically become Life Flight Network members. Members will receive a renewal notice mailed to their mailing address directly from Life Flight Network one month in advance of their expiration date. New members will join through Life Flight Network. In addition to the same reciprocity partnerships that Northwest MedStar offered, Life Flight Network’s reciprocal partnership with other air medical programs expands coverage for members throughout the nation.

While the Northwest MedStar name on the aircraft, ground vehicles and flight suits will remain for a period of time, the program becomes fully integrated and operated by Life Flight Network on April 1, 2016.

Life Flight Network is a not-for-profit medical transport service that started in 1978 as Emanuel Life Flight, making it one of the nation’s oldest air ambulance services. Headquartered in Aurora, Oregon, Life Flight Network provides critical care transport services in Oregon, Idaho, Washington and Montana.

With the integration of Northwest MedStar and announcement of two additional bases, Life Flight Network has expanded its program to be the largest and industry-leading, nationally-recognized not-for-profit air ambulance program with 27 helicopters, 10 fixed-wing aircraft, 22 air medical bases, extensive ground ambulance transports, more than 600 employees, and a combined membership program that will cover more than 200,000 families and individuals.

Life Flight Network has been able to accomplish this growth while maintaining its core mission — to serve the community by providing critical care transportation to ill or injured patients in a safe, compassionate, efficient and expeditious manner.

“It’s an honor for our owners, our organization and team members to be able to expand critical care transport to the communities we serve,” said Griffiths. “Each and every time our teams are sent out, the lives of family members and loved ones are in our care. We take that responsibility, along with safety, to be the two most important values of Life Flight Network.”

For more information about Life Flight Network, including photos and b-roll, visit www.lifeflight.org.
About Northwest MedStar:
Northwest MedStar, a service of Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS), has bases in Spokane, Tri-Cities, Moses Lake, Pullman and Brewster, Wash. and Missoula, Mont. All flights are conducted by and operational control over all aircraft is exercised solely by Metro Aviation, Inc. For more information about Northwest MedStar or INHS, visit nwmedstar.org or inhs.org.

About Life Flight Network:
Life Flight Network, the largest not-for-profit air medical service in the nation, is owned by a consortium of Legacy Emanuel Medical Center, Oregon Health & Science University, Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center and Providence Health & Services. Rotor-wing services are provided by Life Flight Network and fixed-wing services are provided by Life Flight Network and Jackson Jet Center. For more information about Life Flight Network, visit www.lifeflight.org. Aviation services provided by Metro Aviation to existing Northwest MedStar bases will continue to be provided by Metro Aviation until further notice.

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Northwest MedStar Backgrounder
- *Northwest MedStar, the first service operated by Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS), was created in 1994 when Sacred Heart’s Heartflight and Deaconess’ Lifebird air transport programs came together.*
- **6 bases:**
  - Spokane, Richland, Moses Lake, Pullman and Brewster, WA
  - Missoula, Montana
- **Modes of transportation:**
  - Helicopters (rotor wing) – 7
  - Airplanes (fixed wing) – 5
  - Critical care ground ambulances – 8

Life Flight Network Backgrounder
- **Emanuel Life Flight started in 1978.**
- **Life Flight Network was created in 1993 when Emanuel Hospital’s Life Flight program and St. Vincent’s AirCare program came together.**
- **Currently operates 16 bases across Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana:**
  - Aurora, Cottage Grove, Ontario, La Grande, Redmond, Astoria and Pendleton, Oregon
  - Longview and Dallesport, Washington
  - Boise, Lewiston, Coeur d’Alene, Rexburg, Burley and Sandpoint, Idaho
  - Butte, Montana
- **Modes of transportation:**
  - Helicopters (rotor wing) –20
  - Airplanes (fixed wing) – 5
  - Critical care ground ambulances in several locations through partnerships with local EMS agencies.