



Upcoming Events

Winter 2009

February

Metrolina Regional Trauma Advisory Meeting

Subcommittee Meeting at 11 a.m.
Trauma Case Review and Group Meeting at Noon.
Location TBA.

Friday, Feb. 6.

MedCenter Air's First Annual Customer Care Conference

Attention EMS, communication center and hospital directors, medical directors and administration, along with physicians and other personnel involved in using air medical resources. Please join CHS and MCA administration and crews to discuss air medical industry issues and safety initiatives, clinical initiatives for CMC and MCA, new communication resources and customer focus groups to discuss improved operations. Conference will be held at Carolinas Medical Center, 6th floor conference room, Medical Education Building.

6 - 9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26

For a complete list of events and further details, please visit www.medcenterair.org or call 704-355-3996.



Uncompromising Excellence. Commitment to Care. Winter 2009

MedCenter Air Opens South Base for Service

The South Base of MedCenter Air is now operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Crews and aircraft are located at the Rock Hill Airport at Bryant Field. The aircraft, MedCenter 3, responds to scene and interfacility transport requests in North and South Carolina.

Before placement of an aircraft in Rock Hill, EMS crews had to wait an extra 10 minutes for the aircraft to arrive. Ground transport would take at least 30 minutes.

South Base announced several new initiatives. In January, the Bell 430 helicopter, identical to Charlotte and Blue Ridge helicopters, replaced the Bell 230 that was previously used. Twenty-four hour operations began

in January 2009. Construction of the dedicated crew quarters, aircraft hanger and maintenance facility is also underway.

Crew members working at the South Base obtained South Carolina EMS certifications, and MedCenter Air now has a DEA license for the base. MedCenter 3 is also a licensed South Carolina air ambulance. The South Base, as with all MedCenter Air bases, has dedicated pilots, mechanics and medical crews.

For all transport requests, call the MedCenter Air communication center at 1-800-421-9195 or the CHS Physician Connection Line at 1-877-262-6397. ■



MedCenter 3 at the Rock Hill Airport.

Meet the Crew



Loretta Altizer

Paramedic, Blue Ridge Critical Care Transport Unit

Most rewarding part of job:

"Educational opportunities and my co-workers."

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CMC and MedCenter Air Optimize Code STEMI Patient

Code STEMI: SegmenT Elevation Myocardial Infarction. Myocardial Infarction, or MI, is the clinical term for heart attacks.

STEMI response is drawing national attention, and research has shown some surprising data. Thirty percent of STEMI patients fail to receive percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) or clot-busting drugs; 70 percent of STEMI patients who are not eligible for clot-busting therapy fail to receive PCI, the only other reperfusion option. Of those who receive PCI, only 40 percent are treated with door-to-balloon times within 90 minutes, as recommended by the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association. In 2004, the median time to PCI was 293 minutes, according to the Joint Commission.

To optimize Code STEMI patient care, Carolinas Medical Center focuses on parallel processes that maximize the responsiveness of the entire system. The CMC Physician Connection Line and MedCenter Air partner in processing the Code STEMI requests, notifying the Code STEMI Catheterization Team, and simultaneously initiating transport for the patients even before physicians have discussed care.

All STEMI patients are considered “automatic acceptance,” meaning that the referring facility needs only to call the CMC Physician Connection Line (1-800-CMC-MD97), or use the Yellow Phone and notify the operator they have a Code STEMI patient. The operator coordinates patient acceptance under EMTLA with the CMC Emergency Department attending physician.

Once MedCenter Air arrives at the referring facility, patients are loaded with the aircraft running, and the referring ED staff meets MCA at the helipad, when possible. The MCA crew will quickly conduct an assessment and connect the patient to the monitor for transport. IV infusions will be stopped and re-started during the transport. The MCA goal is less than 10 minutes, “skids down to skids up,” with the Code STEMI patients. Day or night, all Code STEMI patients will be taken directly to the cath lab at CMC.



Scene calls or requests directly from EMS are also an important part of the CHS process for Code STEMI patients. Emergency Medical Service providers identifying Code STEMI patients in the field should start the 90 minute clock. EMS providers should then utilize local policies and procedures to initiate scene

requests and landing zone operations at pre-designated LZ's or rendezvous with the aircraft at local hospitals. MedCenter Air will continue initiated treatments, alert the CMC cardiac cath lab, and rapidly transport the patients to the interventional cath lab for cardiac intervention. ■

EMS Equipment Return



Caldwell County EMS loading a patient.

On January 1, 2009, the CMC Sterile Processing Department (CSR) began managing the process of disinfecting backboards and equipment and mailing it back to the respective agency. The new process will help ensure sterilization and expedition of the equipment returns to the county of origin. It will be important to make sure that all agency equipment is clearly labeled with agency name, address and phone number should CSR need to verify an address.

If your station or base is not staffed

to receive mailings, an alternate address may be needed for delivery. The address must be a physical address and not a post office box. MedCenter Air will continue to handle any issues related to lost equipment for EMS agencies. If there are any questions or concerns, please call our customer service line at 704-355-7620.

Gaston, Mecklenburg and Union counties will not be included in mailings as their personnel are at CMC multiple times each day. ■

MedCenter Air Moves to Night Vision



MedCenter Air has made a significant investment and commitment to equip and implement use of night vision goggles for all helicopter operations and crew use.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) began encouraging the use of such equipment to reduce the risk of deadly nighttime crashes during emergency medical flights. In 2008 alone, there were seven accidents involving helicopters leading to 28 fatalities. Efforts to improve EMS helicopter safety leads the NTSB goals. Night flight requests significantly increase crew workload and the risk of accidents due to the inability to visualize terrain, obstacles, meteorological information and other hazards.

Night vision goggles increase the crew's ability to operate safely by taking the tiny amounts of light from the stars, moon, and other man made sources and amplifying it hundreds of times. This enables the pilot and crews to see by changing the dark into shades of green. MedCenter Air purchased nine pairs of Litton 949 to be used at each

of its three helicopter bases. There should not be a significant impact on night time landing zone operations. Ground crews may be asked to extinguish white strobe lights and/or headlights on vehicles. This will depend on crew requests and the type of landing zone crews are operating in.

Landing zones operations will continue to require radio contact between the aircraft and the ground crews with adequate reports of terrain, obstacles, towers, poles, wires and if the landing zone was walked or not. Minimum areas of 100 square feet are also required and larger areas at night are recommended.

Night vision goggles are supplemental safety equipment and require operating guidelines already in place. MedCenter Air uses additional safety devices and initiatives including the Terrain Collision Avoidance System, Outerlink Satellite Tracking System and weather radar. Criteria for accepting flight requests will not change with the addition of the goggles. ■

Blue Ridge Expands Services

The Blue Ridge base has established a critical care ground ambulance to assist regional hospitals in transferring acutely ill and injured patients to tertiary care facilities when local resources are not available. The ambulance is staffed with a MedCenter Air nurse, respiratory therapist/nurse and a paramedic. The ambulance is available Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and when the helicopter is not available due to weather or maintenance.

The ambulance is equipped with the LTV 1200 ventilator, LP12 monitor with invasive monitoring capability and infusion pumps. When the helicopter is unavailable, the ambulance will have access to O-negative blood. As with all services, crews can transport patients to the closest appropriate facility or the facility of the referring physician's choice.

To request the Blue Ridge Critical Care Ambulance, contact MedCenter Air at 1-800-421-9195 or the Physician Connection Line at 1-888-CMC-MD97. ■



Blue Ridge critical care ambulance based at Grace Memorial Hospital, Morganton.

Meet the Crew *Continued from front*



James Robinson

Paramedic, Blue Ridge Critical Care Transport Unit

Most rewarding part of job:

"The challenge, the change from field response to the interfacility role, and furthering my educational preparedness."



Tom Williamson

Registered Respiratory Therapist, Rock Hill Base

Most rewarding part of job:

"My co-workers and helping those in need."