Air Ambulances collaborate for unique webinar

Thursday 2 July, 2020

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Clinicians from air ambulance charities across the UK have shared their experiences of dealing with COVID-19 in a specially-arranged webinar.

The webinar was developed following a series of video calls involving Directors of many of the UK's air ambulances, held during the pandemic as a way of sharing information, best practice, their experiences and offering mutual support when needed

During the meeting nearly a hundred delegates from air ambulances across the country heard expert speakers discuss some of the challenges faced by those working in pre-hospital and retrieval medicine during the pandemic and the learning points that have emerged.

Hosted by Stuart Elms, Clinical Director at Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT), the three hour online gathering included presentations on the COVID-19 disease and impact on patients, communicating under pressure, a very challenging case involving a young person, Moral Injury in COVID-19 and critical care transfers to the NHS Nightingale Hospital in London's Excel Centre.

Stuart Elms commented: "The online meetings started during the pandemic by the Operations and Clinical Directors of air ambulances rapidly developed a synergy where experiences and knowledge was shared to the benefit of all air ambulances. This was an unprecedented, rapidly-developing situation and the mutual support was incredible to witness and has carried on.

"Discussions included how we could share the learning as widely as possible within the air ambulance community and from this grew the idea of a clinical webinar. Literally every air ambulance in the country helped with ideas and offers of speakers.

"The energy and passion for this was phenomenal, I was incredibly privileged to be able to host this on behalf of colleagues across the UK. We have had very positive feedback and if there is a demand then similar events may be held in the future."

The full list of speakers was:

Dr Jey Jeyanathan, Air Ambulance Kent Surrey and Sussex

Dr Stephen Hearns, Emergency Medical Retrieval Service & Core Cognition

Critical Care Paramedic Steve Dick, The Air Ambulance Service

Patient Liaison Manager Adam Crosby, Thames Valley Air Ambulance

Sqn Ldr Elizabeth Paxman, RAF

ENDS

Photograph: Stuart Elms, Clinical Director of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance

For more information contact Gavin Sherriff, PR Officer, on 0345 2417 690 or 07870 158 309

Notes to Editor:

• Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) is a Charity that provides a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) for the critically ill and injured of Essex, Hertfordshire and the surrounding areas.

• The service is provided free of charge but, unlike NHS emergency services, the Charity receives limited direct funding from the Government and none from the National Lottery. It costs in excess of £750,000 every month to keep the service operational and cover all charitable costs, and this would not be possible without the generosity and goodwill of people and businesses of Essex, Hertfordshire and beyond.

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• Each of the Charity's HEMS teams consist of two Pilots, a Pre-hospital Care Doctor and a Critical Care Paramedic.

• These teams, made up of highly-skilled individuals, attended 1,526 patients in 2019 and are the backbone of your local life-saving Charity.

• The fleet consists of two Air Ambulances, and four rapid response vehicles (RRVs - cars) The RRVs are crewed by a Pre-hospital Care Doctor and a Critical Care Paramedic and carry the same life-saving equipment as the helicopters.

• During the day, from 7am until 8.00pm, the Critical Care Team provides the service using helicopters based at Earls Colne and North Weald. An RRV is used before sunrise, after sunset or when the helicopter is unable to fly because of poor weather or maintenance.

• Overnight from 7.30pm to 7.30am the service is provided using an RRV based at North Weald.

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