Historic first for Essex & Herts Air Ambulance as 24/7 service begins

Friday 4 October, 2019

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From October 7th 2019, an Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) critical care team will be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This is the first time in the Charity's 21-year history that it has been able to provide a fully 24/7 service to the people of Essex, Hertfordshire and the surrounding areas.

This major development for the Charity has come after many months of preparation and planning. It means that EHAAT can deliver advanced pre-hospital care to critically ill and injured patients regardless of the time of day or night.

During the day, from 7am until 8pm, the service will be provided by the Charity's helicopters based at Earls Colne and North Weald airbases.

During the hours of darkness an EHAAT Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) based at North Weald will be used from 7.30pm to 7.30am.

As is currently the case, RRVs will also be used during daylight hours if the helicopters are unable to fly because of extreme weather conditions.

Like the helicopters, the RRVs carry a pre-hospital care doctor and a critical care paramedic. They are equipped with the same life-saving equipment.

Stuart Elms, Clinical Director at EHAAT, said: "We are very excited to be starting 24/7 operations after a lot of hard work from everyone in the Charity and our partner organisation, the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

"There was an intensive recruitment phase to obtain the necessary number of pre-hospital care doctors and critical care paramedics to give us the numbers and the resilience to safely work 24/7.

"At night we will still be tasked to the same kinds of calls that we would do during the day. We will have exactly the same equipment and highly skilled team bringing the hospital to the patient.

"Patient care and the safety of the team when responding in the hours of darkness are very important. Working on scene at night can be very technically demanding so we are giving our teams the training and equipment they require to work safely.

"Our excellent governance processes will keep an eye on all the missions to ensure that no matter the hour, we work at the same standard of excellence."

-ENDS-

Photographs: EHAAT AW169 helicopter and Rapid Response Vehicle, Stuart Elms (Clinical Director)

For more information please contact Gavin Sherriff, PR Officer,

on 0345 2417 690 or 07870 158309

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 no direct funding from the Government or 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

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possible without the generosity and goodwill of people and businesses of Essex, Hertfordshire and beyond.

- 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, tended to 1,491 patients in 2018 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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