



Contacts: Nicole Stewart, Northwest MedStar, 509-768-6665, and Stacy Rogge, Providence St. Patrick Hospital, 406-329-2910

### **Providence St. Patrick Hospital and Community Medical Center Announce Agreement with Northwest MedStar**

Missoula, MT -- After months of careful review, Providence St. Patrick Hospital and Community Medical Center have entered into an agreement with Northwest MedStar to provide critical care transport services, previously provided by the Life Flight air ambulance program.

Northwest MedStar will begin base operations on April 2, 2014.

The hospitals entered into the arrangement with Northwest MedStar to achieve better operational efficiency and to align with a critical care transport group with similar goals, services and operational structure. St. Pat's is the regional Level II Trauma Center and Community Medical Center offers the area's only Level IIIB Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. These programs require highly specialized and efficient air ambulance programs to save lives.

Jeff Fee, CEO, Providence Health & Services Western Montana Region, said this agreement will support our partnership with Community Medical Center and critical access hospitals, and also maintain and grow our membership program.

"Northwest MedStar is an established, high-quality, non-profit critical care service with expertise in running a critical care transport business," Fee said. "Ultimately, we are strengthening the service, assuring critical care transport services will be offered in the region for the long term."

MedStar was founded in 1994 by Spokane's two hospital systems to merge a group of formerly competitive and often money-losing services, including their respective Heartflite and Lifebird air ambulance operations.

Joyce Dombrowski, RN, Chief Acute Services Officer for PH&S WMR said that the Life Flight staff was informed of the decision earlier in the day, and has been part of the review process throughout. Everyone will work together to make the transition as smooth as possible.

“Northwest MedStar looks forward to working with the local team to continue the quality, critical care transport services for Montana residents,” said Eveline Bisson, program director of Northwest MedStar. “The local staff has a remarkable reputation for providing the highest quality care and we are excited to continue that commitment to the region.”

Life Flight has 16 full-time employees. Staff will be applying for positions with Northwest MedStar. The pilots and mechanics will not see any change, since they are contracted with Metro Aviation Inc., of Shreveport, Louisiana, as MedStar also does.

“The most important outcome of this process is our community members and patients won’t experience any disruption in critical care transport services,” said Tim Donovan, MD, medical director of the Life Flight program. “We will continue to provide excellent care in an environment where patient and crew safety come first.”

Northwest MedStar’s primary service area covers eastern and central Washington, northern Idaho, western Montana and eastern Oregon. Northwest MedStar also provides patient transport to Seattle and other facilities throughout the United States and parts of Canada. Since 1996, Northwest MedStar has received continuous accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS).

“It’s an honor to be selected as the preferred provider of critical care transport services to Montana healthcare providers and community members,” said Nancy Vorhees, Inland Northwest Health Services COO over Northwest MedStar and Montana native. “We look forward to furthering our collaboration with providers in the region and serving patients.”

For more information on Northwest MedStar: [www.NWMedStar.org](http://www.NWMedStar.org)