

Program Focus: Flight For Life Colorado

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Flight for Life Colorado has played a large part in the history of air medical transport. We have been in continuous service since 1972 and were the first civilian, hospital based emergency medical helicopter service in the United States. The Denver Children's transport team joined Flight for Life Colorado in 1997 and the two have been working as a team ever since. Our location in and around the Rocky Mountains plays an interesting role in the way we do things. Flight for Life transports patients from all over the region, which demands a flexible mode of travel. Severe weather and altitude play a part in our transport and patient care throughout a large portion of the year.



Flight for Life covers a lot of ground, with bases at six different hospitals in Colorado and a seventh base at a Denver metro area airport. Four of our bases are in the Denver area, one in Frisco Pueblo, and one in Colorado Springs. We have adult teams with RT/RN/EMT on ground units, RT/RN or EMT-P/RN on our fixed wing airplanes, and EMT-P/RN on our helicopters. On our newborn/young child team, we operate with an RT/RN/EMT.

Four of the six hospitals have helicopters based on the premises. Our helicopters are piloted and maintained by Air Methods. We use the American Eurocopter B3 A Star, which cruises at approximately 140 miles an hour. Flight for Life also has a long-standing contract with Mayo Aviation, which provides our fixed winged service. Through Mayo, we have two fixed wing aircraft and access to Learjets for longer trips.

Our respiratory therapists on the newborn/young child team are highly skilled and come with lots of experience. All of our therapists must be well versed in neonatal, cardiac, and pediatric disease processes. Our respiratory therapists help cover the neonatal, pediatric and cardiac units, along with the emergency department, while in house at Denver Children's Hospital. This allows them to keep up with the constant advancements in respiratory care.

While on transport, the respiratory therapist works hand-in-hand with the RN and EMT to stabilize and transport as safely as possible. We have four isolettes (one for ground transports, two for fixed wing transports, and one for rotor wing). We also have ground and fixed wing pediatric stretchers. Our isolettes are equipped with Propaq monitors, Crossvent 2i ventilators, TCMs, and extra pulse oximeters to monitor pre- and post-ductal saturations. We also have the ability to deliver nitric oxide during transport to patients ranging from neonatal to adult. Our newborn/young child team is one of two in the world currently using the new INOmax DS nitric oxide delivery devices.

Flight For Life's adult care respiratory therapists have become excellent assets to our adult transport team. They transport critically ill adults and young adults throughout the region. They lend their ventilator management skills to patients in very dire situations. Currently we are using the Pulmonetics LTV 1000 for all of our patients 5 kg and above. Our respiratory therapists continually share their knowledge of ventilator management with both RNs and EMT-Ps to better serve our patients.

Flight For Life Colorado has a very busy year planned. We just finished moving the University of Colorado Hospital newborn population to its new location. We will be the primary team to move the Children's Hospital patients to the new location in September. Our respiratory therapists, both on the adult and the newborn/young child side will be instrumental in ensuring these critically ill patients safely reach their destination.

Some qualifications for joining this busy team include five years critical care experience and one year of employment at Children's Hospital. For more information, please visit our [web site](#).